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FROM

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BHAGAVAD GITA

"The Songs of the Master"

BHAGAVAD GITA

“The Songs of the Master”

TRANSLATED WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND
COMMENTARY BY

CHARLES JOHNSTON

BENGAL CIVIL SERVICE, RETIRED
INDIAN CIVIL SERVICE, SANSKRIT PRIZEMAN
DUBLIN UNIVERSITY, SANSKRIT PRIZEMAN



CHARLES JOHNSTON
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tion of these four great races was, doubtless, the source of the ancient parable that from the head of Brahma were born the Brahmans; from his arms, the Rajputs; from his middle, the Vaishyas; from his feet, the Shudras.

A large part of ancient Indian law was concerned with the balancing of duties and rights between the four races. Each had its genius and gifts; and the selective force of development had naturally assigned a province of activities to each. For each, there were certain duties, a certain "dharma" by fulfilling which he could obtain fullness of life and salvation; and thus an ideal race perfection was held up to each of the four stems. Further, every barrier was placed in the way of intermarriage, for it was found that, in general, half-breeds failed to inherit the better qualities of either parent. The word mulatto, or mule-like, is used by Manu's commentator, in describing the half-bred stocks, the result of caste-mixture; and the Manu code is most stringent in its prohibition of race mixture.

This is what Arjuna means, when he speaks of mingling of caste, or, more properly, mingling of color, and the social anarchy which would follow it, toward the close of the first book; and it is of the genius and duties of the different races that Krishna speaks later on.

There was another quality which sprang from the original difference of race: a difference in spiritual insight and religious ideal. The Rajputs had their ancient tradition, which is put forth in the greater Upanishads, and which held the twin doctrine of rebirth and liberation. This tradition, as we have seen, was at first the hereditary teaching of the Rajputs alone, and was much later imparted to the Brahmans.

The Brahmans also had their faith. In Indra and Agni, they adored certain great cosmic principles, and the Vedic hymns record the ritual of their worship. They believed in the soul's immortality, but did not hold the teaching of rebirth until the Rajputs disclosed it to them. They conceived the souls of the dead as still present in earthly life, making a united life with the living members of the family, and bound to them by close ties of moral and psychical kinship. Every year, they offered sacrifices to them; cakes of rice to the father, grandfather and great-grandfather; fragments of the cakes to the next three generations; and libations of water to the three still higher. In the extreme theory of Indian law, the inheritance was for the purpose of providing for these memorial rites, and the title to celebrate them was, and is deemed to-day, evidence of the right to inherit. The rites thus depend on purity of line, on a clear title of descent. Any obscurity of birth impedes

the rites, so that by this obscurity the ancestors may be "cut off from the offerings of rice-cake and water." On these offerings their spiritual sustenance was held to depend, and they were thought of as falling into the pit of hell, when their sustenance failed. This ancient ancestor-worship runs through the whole of Brahmanical law. It is almost identical with the spiritual system which prevails in China, Korea and Japan; and in Korea the rites and obligations depending on the souls of ancestors are almost exactly what they were under Manu's code.

The yellow race of central India held, and for the most part holds to-day, a somewhat similar belief. To it is added a practical spiritualism, the priests being mediums, who obtain communications from the souls of the departed ancestors, in trances and visions. In modern times, we have been witness of a revival in western lands of this ancient cult of many Asian races.

The black races had their beliefs, but they were wilder and more elemental. Fierce and grimly destructive gods, symbolized from the darker and more menacing powers of nature, of cataclysm and disease, were propitiated in wild emotional rites. Much stress was laid on such forces as mesmerism, hypnotism and the evil eye. The many-armed and fantastic Indian gods are, in all likelihood, the contribution of the darker races of the south to the common fund. They have their place in that part of the Bhagavad Gita, which describes the transfiguration of Krishna, with many faces and many arms.

Thus each of the four races contributed an element of form to the great composite of Indian religion. There were also profound differences of spirit. There was the great tradition of the Upanishads, in origin belonging to the Rajputs. That tradition was based on the intuition of the soul, the immortal, with its splendid powers and high destiny. The soul and its powers are the secret theme of the greater Upanishads; and they reveal the soul as it is in life, as it is in death. They trace the soul from its fountainhead in the Eternal, in its downward course through the three manifested worlds. In each world it has its fitting vesture, its fitting perceptions and powers. Lowest of these is that physical body with its animal life, which plays its part on the stage of this mortal world. It is but the sheath of the personal, psychical self of egotism and passion, who is the moving figure in the wars and contests of our human life, and who fills the world of dreams, whether in waking or in sleep.

Above this personal self is the spiritual being, the higher Self, in the sunlight of the eternal. This is the real man, the immortal, and for

his purposes are enacted all the dramas of this our life. In his being all gains are harvested, all losses have their purpose and explanation; and in his wider life all mysteries and perils of this our life are but the incidents, the rough material of final and enduring good. We have all of us had moments in which we have caught glimpses of this mighty secret, and felt the brooding presence of the mightier Self. Feeling that we, indeed, are poor, orphaned and insignificant, we are yet aware that there is in us that whose very glory makes our poverty and meanness so sensible in contrast; that these mazes and confusions of our earthly life, with their crying tragedies of wrong and sorrow and separation, are, in truth, no tragedies, but ordered movements in a greater drama, in which we, through our divine life, play a part that is immortal. We have felt the might and majesty of that larger life descend upon us, mantling us in glory, and have known that we are not mere stragglers in the wilderness, but that we are close to the divine heart of being, and that all is well provided for, in power and glory and love.

★ This teaching of inspiration, of intuition, of faith, is the inspiring spirit of the Upanishads, to which the name of Vedanta, the End of the Veda, was, in due time, given. In historic origin, it is the sacred tradition of the Rajputs; and the Rajputs derived from it the twin doctrines of rebirth and liberation, which formed the heart of their secret teaching. They taught that the psychical, personal man might follow either one of two contrasted destinies. He might remain under the sway of his bodily longings and desires, and blind to the greater spiritual life above him; a man amongst men, and with all the weakness and failings of fallen humanity. In this case, blinded by passion and fettered by egotism, he was shut off for the time from his larger destiny. At death, he entered a world of dreams, there reaping the harvest of such good and righteous acts as he might have performed, and destined, when this harvest was consumed, to be reborn in this human world, a man once more in the world of men. Stumbling forward along the path, with his blindness still upon him, he met the same fate again and again, falling once more under Death's dominion. And thus it was with him, until the day of his liberation dawned.

When that day came, he began to perceive the brooding presence of the greater Self, who, in truth, had guided the cycle of his births and led him along the devious ways of many lives. He felt that he was no longer alone in the wilderness of the world, but that he was guarded, watched, provided for; and that the guardian was his own divine Self. But feeling this, he came to a dark and difficult region of the path. Per-

sonal desires, kinships, claims beset him, and all the longings of personal life. And the immortal claims beset him also, very importunate, demanding perfect sacrifice, and pointing to a path that led away from the level places of the world. "Then came the great and immemorial conflict between the personal and the divine will; between the man's self and his better Self. The prize of victory was liberation, and liberation was immortal life, in the sunlight of the Eternal. This was the teaching of the greater Upanishads, and this is the conflict to which Krishna urges Arjuna."

Besides this way of intuition, there was a way of abstract reason, in which we should, doubtless, perceive the genius of the Brahmins expressing itself. This abstract reason approached the problem with the mind rather than with the soul; and, faithfully using the mind, reached very valuable results. Piercing by a powerful insight through the appearances of things, it perceived a single reality, one Being, wherein all rests. In that Being were hid certain powers, which, in due time, manifested themselves; and through their manifestation, all the worlds and all creatures were presently produced. First of these great primal powers was that of causation, which we may conceive as the power of number. For, when we count a series of things in number, we imply much more than that they are different. We imply that they are related, and that they follow each other in orderly sequence. The three stages which we call cause, causing and effect are but one instance of numbering; we think of the second as the result of the first, and the third as the result of the second. Numbering also contains the idea of division, of diversity, and thus implies differentiation in the one Substance, which was originally "alone and without a second." Through differentiation, the one Being becomes many beings. From this principle of numbering, the system which sprang from it was called the Sankhya or Number system.

The next step in this system was the idea of succession, the root of time, and the marking of a new stage in evolution or emanation, whereby the manifold beings created by differentiation became manifested in time. Finally from time sprang space, which is but the field of many series of succession, conceived as taking place simultaneously; and with space added to time and causation, the frame of the universe was complete. In reality, these three great tendencies, which gave birth to nature, were but mirages, things which seemed to be, as compared with veritable Being; and the way of salvation, for the Sankhyas, lay in a perception of Being, above all differentiation, "alone and without a

second." We are only seemingly beings; we are really Being; this was their thought. And differentiation is but the fruit of the many-sided mind, which perceives as diverse that which is really one. Therefore, to reach liberation, we must disentangle ourselves from the net of the mind, and see ourselves as Being, as pure Spirit. Thus by sheer intellect, by abstract philosophy, the Sankhyas sought the final goal of man. And, though few bear the name of Sankhya in India to-day, yet very many, who call themselves Vedantins, are really Sankhyas, thinking that by acts of the intellect the goal is to be won.

Two other forms of faith are outlined in the Gita. There is the way of works, and there is the way of devotional feeling. The first seeks salvation by doing all things as to the Lord, by fulfilling all duties as a ritual of the great religion of service. The others seek to find the way by a certain exaltation of the heart; by carrying into all life a glow of emotion, a rapture, a gladness manifested first in a joyful ceremonial of festivals, and then turning all life into a festival. It might be suggested that the ritual way of works springs from the yellow race, always prone to minute ceremony; as to-day in China and Korea, victims of the ceremonial tendency; and that the way of emotion came from the emotional darker races of the south. But this point need not be pressed.

What is of far more importance is, that each of these ways of worship represents a great primary tendency of the human heart and mind; and that along one or other of them must be sought the answer to the riddle of life. Intuition, intellect, work, feeling: these are the four great methods whereby we can approach the mystery; and the truth is, that they are not rivals but allies; all must be used, if a wise balance is to be maintained.

The author or authors of the Bhagavad Gita set themselves to describe the great conflict, and to show in what way each of the powers may help toward victory. The personal man begins to feel the greater Self above him, with its insistent voice, its brooding power. About him is the furniture of his habitual life, to which he is bound by many dear, close ties; many things are threatened, if he is to follow that new and imperious voice from within and above; many things are visibly condemned. He had his ideals of worldly success, of wealth, of ambition, of regard and consideration for others. How will these stand if the great silent voice be obeyed? He will then have to set out on a path not that of mortals; and many mortal things must pass away from him as he treads it. How shall he apply himself to the task? How make even the

first resolve to undertake it? How shall he substitute for the varicolored lights of the world the quiet light of the soul? These are the questions sought to be answered in the Bhagavad Gita, and nothing more dramatic could be imagined than the position of Krishna and Arjuna on the battlefield, which is made the occasion of their answers.

Krishna points again and again to a certain principle, which will form a safe clue through the labyrinth; a principle which we may call disinterested work. Let us give a few examples:

If an artist finds some inspiring thought of beauty, some insight into the finer quality of things, he seeks to embody this inspiration in a picture. He also has material needs and a thirst for praise. These two tendencies pull him opposite ways. He must center the whole ardor of his will and heart on the pure ideal of beauty, and paint for that alone, if he wishes to paint a worthy picture. If he thinks of personal profit, he will fail.

Again, a general in war should hold in view only his duty to his country, disregarding thought of praise or blame, or safety or death. If he thinks of these, he will be rash or weak; advancing too far, or supinely surrendering in fear. Purely disinterested valor is his one path of honor.

In action toward others, the same rule holds. We must keep clearly in heart the other's real good, and seek to accomplish that, putting away every thought of our own profit. Thus we shall do something clean, holy and sanative, which will cement the bonds of real love.

Finally, in our relation with the Highest, we must put away the thought of personal gain. We must with clear intuition perceive the task set us by the divine Life, and with high valor perform it, leaving all further matters out of sight. The heart's devotion must be laid on the altar, and from that pure offering a knowledge of divine life will arise. This is Krishna's doctrine of disinterestedness, of detachment, to which he comes back again and again. By following it we shall gradually untie the knot of the heart, and the hard and dense psychic nature will become purified and transparent, so that some of the divine light may come down into our hearts and we may hear the quiet voice of our immortality.

Thereafter, born again from above, we begin a new and immortal life. We are no longer creatures of this earth only, but dwellers in the spiritual universe. We work with divine and everlasting law, carrying out the commands of infinite love. A great tenderness and gentleness dwells in our hearts, and we feel the sorrow and pain of every being, not of men and women only, but of those lesser lives who are also bound to us by close ties of brotherhood. Passing through sacrifice, we shall live in joy, great and evermore increasing, till it fills all life, the heavens and the earth

philosophy

alike. Power will be given us to carry out the things of our immortality, and the vesture of pain and the limits of the mortal will pass away like a curtain that is withdrawn. The Eternal coming to us, and we entering into the Eternal, we shall know ourselves as that infinite All, and know the Self in us as the Self of all beings made one through love. This is liberation, the path of immortal and infinite life.

From the beginning of the way we shall find a threefold expression of power in our spiritual progress. First, through strong aspiration, we shall strive with the whole power of our hearts toward the still but dimly discerned Highest. Then, as the result of long and ardent effort, continued with devotion and sacrifice, we shall find the light suddenly grow into full illumination, knowing ourselves in the presence of the Soul. Gathering into our hearts and memories that revelation, we shall store it for future use, and, the hour of our illumination past, we shall take up again the tasks of our daily life, seeking the realization of our high inspiration. There are these three: aspiration, illumination, realization; the "pistis, gnosis, sophia" of the Greek mystics. And it is held by some students of the Bhagavad Gita that its eighteen books are consciously divided according to this threefold law; six books of aspiration; six books of illumination; six books of realization. It is worth while to see how far this works out in detail, and how close the correspondence may be; but certain it is that the beginning of the poem is concerned with the search for the light; the middle is dominated by the transfiguration of Krishna; and the close by the practical application to life of the laws and inspirations already reached.

At what time was the Bhagavad Gita written? If we are justified in holding the views already suggested, it was written at different times, through several centuries, growing gradually to fuller and fuller completeness. The kernel is that poem or ballad of Krishna and Arjuna, which must have been composed soon after the great battle of Kurukshetra; and to that kernel layer after layer was added, as the ages passed.

In the days of Shankara Acharya, the work was already complete, in its present form. And great Shankara lived, according to the traditions of the schools he founded in southern India, some twenty-two hundred years ago. But we must put the Bhagavad Gita somewhat further back, even in its complete and final form. For some two centuries before the date assigned to great Shankara, Patanjali lived and taught, recording in the Yoga Sutras the sum and essence of his philosophy. And these Sutras are evidently later and more developed than the

Bhagavad Gita, and are, indeed, the final summing up of that long tradition of Yoga teaching, many aspects of which are spoken of in this poem.

Patanjali was, in all probability, a contemporary of Gautama, the Buddha, who lived some five and twenty centuries ago. And the fact that there is no clear trace of the Buddha's mighty mission in the Bhagavad Gita is another reason for assigning it, even in its final form, to an earlier date.

We shall, perhaps, come closest to the truth, if we think of the Bhagavad Gita as veritably recording the teaching and mission of Krishna, though with certain added themes; and of Krishna's mission as but one in a long series of revelations through Rajput sages, which made and continued the spiritual life of India.

Thus, in archaic times, we have the greater Upanishads, with their doctrines of the royal sages, teachings hitherto imparted to no Brahman, as two of the great Upanishads declare; and in Vedic times also we have the hymns of the Rajput Vishvamitra, seer of the third Mandala of the Rig Veda, wherein is contained the thrice-holy Gayatri.

After Vishvamitra and the Upanishads, we have Rama of Ayodya, esteemed a divine avatar; and, after Rama, prince Krishna of Dvaraka, hero, sage and seer of Rajput race. Krishna himself insists on this, at the beginning of the fourth book of the Bhagavad Gita: "This imperishable Yoga I have declared to the Solar lord. The Solar lord imparted it to Manu, and Manu told it to Ikshvaku. Thus the Rajput sages and seers knew it, handed down from Master to disciple."

Then, in the fullness of time, if our understanding be right, prince Siddhartha the Compassionate, himself a descendant of Ikshvaku, once more gave forth to the world the Rajput sacred teaching, enriched as of old by the twin doctrines of rebirth and liberation from rebirth—liberation, to which, following the older Indian tradition already recorded in the Bhagavad Gita, the Awakened Siddhartha gave the splendid name of Nirvana.

This great doctrine, thus handed down from Master to disciple, forms the living heart of the Eastern wisdom, and, as a tribute to that wisdom, this rendering of the Bhagavad Gita is made.

INTRODUCTION TO BOOK I.

THE first book and a great part of the second book belong without doubt to the earliest period of the Bhagavad Gita. They are an integral part of the bardic cycle of the War of the Kurus and Pandus, which forms the kernel of the great Indian epic poem, the Mahabharata. The style is that of the martial epic, and the strong personal outlines of the chief figures have not begun to take on a symbolic and universal coloring. Arjuna is still the prince of Hastinapura, and Krishna is the warrior lord of Dvaraka, come to help him in the fight for his kingdom. As the second book progresses, both assume a larger and more universal aspect, and the arguments of Krishna grow wider in scope, of universal application and everlasting import. We can see the work gradually growing from the bardic poem to the spiritual scripture.

A few words, to make the position of the persons more intelligible. Two brothers, Dhritarashtra and Pandu, were princes of Hastinapura, in the territory between the upper waters of the Ganga and Yamuna, now called the Ganges and Jumna. The place of the great, ancient city is reputed to be not far from Delhi. Dhritarashtra had many sons, of whom Duryodhana was eldest. Pandu, twice married, had five sons, spoken of as the five Pandu princes, from the name of their father. The sons of Dhritarashtra drove the sons of Pandu out of the kingdom. Then, after a period of exile, the sons of Pandu gathered a host of allies, invaded their ancestral territory, and fought a great contest at Kurukshetra, a decisive battle in the history of ancient India.

Of the five sons of Pandu, Arjuna was the most eminent. He bears many names. He is called the son of Pandu when it is clear that he alone of the five brothers is spoken of. He is described as the son of Pritha, his mother, who, by adoption, also bore the name of Kunti. He is called the descendant of Bharata, the conqueror of wealth, the lord of the crested locks, the lord of the monkey banner.

In like manner, his great ally Krishna has many titles. He is the slayer of the demon Madhu. He is the descendant of Vrishni. He is the lord of the flowing hair, of the beautiful hair. He is the arouser of men. He is the lord of the earth. Thus from local and personal titles, he gradually passes to names of universal and spiritual significance, just as the book itself passes from the bardic poem to the spiritual scripture.

The father of Dhritarashtra had two half-brothers. One of these, Bhishma, espoused the cause of Dhritarashtra and his sons, and led their army. He is called the grandsire, the elder Kuru, and was the granduncle not only of Duryodhana and his brothers, but also of Arjuna, Bhima, Yudhisthira, Sahadeva and Nakula, the five sons of Pandu. The second half-brother was Krishna Dvaipayana, who bears the title of the Vyasa, the Revealer, a name associated with many sacred Indian books.

The great war was thus a contest between the children of two brothers, and Arjuna's horror and remorse were entirely natural. The grief and despondency attributed to him had, no doubt, their real historic existence, which was made the motive of a splendidly dramatic bardic poem, the kernel of our book.

Besides the horror of fratricide, there is another motive for Arjuna's misery. That motive is found in the thought of the spiritually united family, made up of the living and the dead, which was the old popular religion of India, as of many other Asian and Western lands. The members of the family were thought of as held together by spiritual bonds; the souls of the departed, dwelling beyond the threshold of the visible world, continued to take part in all its hopes and fears, and were united with their descendants still living upon earth. More than this, their spiritual well-being depended on these descendants, who fed their ethereal bodies with yearly offerings of rice-cakes and water. The duty of making this offering was a most sacred one, and fell to the male head of the family, in his representative capacity. His headship was bound up with this mystical rite, and he inherited the property of his fathers, in theory, in order that the cost of the rite might be secured. So vital was the due performance of this rite, that, where no son was born, it became a sacred duty to adopt a son, who thus became the representative of the family, and offered the mystical sustenance to the spirits of the fathers. A vivid story of ancient India represents the ancestors of a certain Jaratkaru as suspended by a slender thread over the pit of hell, the rat of Time ever gnawing the thread. As the offering

of cakes was made, the thread grew thicker. If the offering failed, the rat cut the thread, and the souls fell into the pit of hell. Arjuna fears that, in this war of kinsman, the sons of the warring brothers will fall; and, the offerings thus failing, all their honored and worshipped forefathers will be condemned to spiritual ruin.

Lastly, there is the fear for the women of their families, a fear always present in war until quite recent times. The women, left unprotected, were the real victims of the war, far more than the warriors who fell in fight. Arjuna fears lest the women of his family, of old and noble Rajput race, may be left unguarded, and thus fall victims to the lower races of other colors, who made up a great part of the peoples of India. This fear of race-mingling runs all through Indian law, and the most stringent rules were made to guard against it, and to humiliate the offspring of race mixture. Spiritual as well as temporal ignominy attended the sin of mingling of races, and this dread, always present to the thought of the noble races of India, comes back in full force to Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra.

There is a spiritual significance to all this, and the situation of Arjuna is well chosen to bring out great spiritual truths. He stands for the personal self, beginning to grow conscious of the Higher Self; touched and enkindled with the spiritual light of that Higher Self, yet full of dismay and terror from the realization of what obedience to the Higher Self must mean. The contest of brothers is now concentrated within a single nature, the life of a single man. A war must be waged within himself, a war long and arduous, for the life of the Soul. Nothing but high courage, joined with faith and aspiration, makes the contest possible, and even then there will be shrinking and dismay. Against the still, small voice of the Soul are arrayed the strong forces of the material nature, the passions, the mind. These are the opposing brothers on the field of the Law.

Of the same conflict, another Teacher, speaking for the Soul, has said: Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross and followeth after me is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

INTRODUCTION TO BOOK I.

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The losing of his life that he may find it is the great fratricidal war , that opens the door to the Path, and the shrinking and dismay of Arjuna have thus their universal value and significance. He is facing the battle of man, as he grieves there in the chariot, between the two armies, while the arrows are already falling.

INTRODUCTION TO BOOK II.

The very first speech of Krishna, though he says only a few words, strikes the keynote of the Soul. He appeals to Arjuna's manhood, to his martial valor, to his instinct of noble race, to his ideal of honor. Through these high powers, the Soul moulds the individual nature of man, and guides it along the way that leads to the Path. These fine virtues are the Soul's representatives in individual life.

Arjuna replies with pathetic force, with a grief and shrinking that are altogether genuine, in dismay at the fight which he is called to fight. He once more puts forward his pitiful plea, and speaks of all he is asked to sacrifice. He shrinks from losing his life that he may save it; the price seems too great; the burden is unendurable. We may follow the symbolic purpose of the poem, and state in universal terms the sacrifice Arjuna is called on to make, in order that the personal self may give place to the Higher Self.

There is, first, the inheritance of the long struggle for life in the animal world, the instinct of self-preservation, the determination to make life a contest for one's separate fortune; the gospel of worldly and material success. The general lives of men are lived for success, but his life must be lived for obedience to divine Law. He is not to work his separate will, he is to work the will of the Father in Heaven, the Divine Self, the Soul.

Then, as a finer form of the first, there is ambition; the desire for name and fame; the desire to be thought well of, to be spoken well of, to be noticed and commented on, to be famous and admired. This is to give way to another desire, the desire that the divine will may be done, as in the divine world, so in the human world; and no praise will be valid but that of the still, small voice.

Then there are the desires of the senses, very hungry and importunate, begging incessantly to be fed, urging, stinging, tormenting; and these must be stilled, before the divine voice can be heard. All desires that abide in the heart must be let go, before the light and life and love of the Soul can dwell there.

In fine, the whole former structure of things is to pass away, the scheme of life built on hopes and fears and wishes; all relationships with others based on self-seeking, on desire, on the hunger of the senses, are to be transmuted; the personal will is to be transformed, so that only the divine will shall remain, guiding all things into new ways, making a new heaven and a new earth. And from the death that precedes this renewal, the heart of man shrinks. The sacrifice alone is certain, the resurrection is hid in darkness.

To the doubt and fear of Arjuna, Krishna makes a series of answers. These answers are arranged in an order which is very significant. There is an answer for each power of the soul, an answer addressed to each obstacle of the soul. First, to the question of fear, of material and natural dread, comes the answer of valor, the statement of the Soul. The Soul is divine, immortal, full of splendor, therefore what need we fear? The Soul can suffer no loss, therefore what loss need we dread? The temporal body belongs to the eternal lord of the body; therefore, fight, O son of Bharata!

This first answer of Krishna, running to verse 25, is the grandest and most eloquent passage in the whole book. It is the affirmation of the Soul, the splendid vindication of intuition. It is of the quality of the greater Upanishads, and many of its verses are taken from them, or from some common store from which they also came.

The second answer of Krishna is addressed rather to the doubting mind. And to the mind he replies, by citing a law evident to the mind, the law of mutation. All things change; change is inevitable; death follows birth; rebirth follows death. There is no escaping change, rebirth, transformation. Therefore accept this great transformation, the mystical rebirth.

Thirdly, Krishna appeals to Arjuna's pride and sense of honor; to the warrior instinct of the Soul, that high courage which is the voice of the Soul itself, for all valor is of the Soul.

Finally, Krishna brings forward the thought which, more than all others, is the heart of this whole poem; the thought of detachment, of disinterested work done in union with the Soul. Of this great and central thought we shall have to say much. At this place, however, the even course of the poem is broken up by certain passages later added, and to which we must now call attention. The first is verse 39: "This thought is declared to thee according to Sankhya; now hear it according to Yoga," and so on. Then a few lines further, verses 42 to 46, there is an impassioned attack on the ceremonial worship of the Vedas, such

an attack as is made more than once in the Upanishads, where the Mystic protests against the system of the Priest. This again is a manifest addition. If we leave out these two passages, what remains is entirely cogent and continuous in thought. We may show this by giving the passage without the additions.

"Either slain thou wilt gain heaven, or conquering thou wilt enjoy the earth; therefore arise, O son of Kunti, determined to do battle! Making equal good and ill fortune, gain and loss, victory and defeat, gird thyself for the fight, for thus thou shalt not fall into sin! Here is no loss of advantage, nor any going back; even a little of this law saves from the great fear. The thought whose essence is determination is single, O rejoicer of the Kurus! Many-branched and endless are the thoughts of the undetermined. Thy right is to the work, but never to its fruits; let not the fruit of thy work be thy motive, nor take refuge in abstinence from works. Standing in union with the Soul carry out thy work, putting away attachment, O conqueror of wealth; equal in success and failure, for equalness is called union with the Soul."

The verses which follow carry on the same thought, and develop it with lucidity, power and beauty. A man should give up personal wants and wishes, and in all things act only for the Soul. Let him by purity and devotion gain the vision of the Soul, and then let him in all things serve that Master, obeying only the behests of the Soul. Such a one will gain the Godlike resting-place, and, at the time of the end, will enter into union with the Eternal.

There is great significance in the order in which these arguments are put before Arjuna. The order followed is that in which the successive battles must be fought and won.

First will come the battle for the intuition of the Divine, the great fight against materialist fear, where victory brings certainty that the Soul is. Then, as the second step, and as confirming us in carrying on the struggle, comes the thought of necessary transformation; growth is perpetual, therefore let us throw the weight of our wills on the side of that which is to be, not holding fearfully to that which now is. Then there is the appeal to the warrior spirit, to the high valor which dwells in every Soul, waiting to be called forth, the valor needed, if we are to go forward on the path. Finally, there is detachment, based on recollection and Soul-vision, as the way in which alone we may go forward with our great work.

INTRODUCTION TO BOOK III.

Krishna has unveiled to Arjuna the teaching of the divine Soul, unborn, immemorial, ancient, who is not slain when the body is slain. He has regarded the Soul also as ever passing through death and birth, and therefore imperishable. He has challenged Arjuna to valor, calling on the warrior in him to fight. From valor he has passed to the kindred virtue of high disinterestedness: let not the fruit of thy work be thy motive; standing in union with the Soul, carry out thy work, putting away attachment. And he has insisted that this union with the Soul, this soul-vision, is the great matter, the road of liberation, the way of peace.

Arjuna is perplexed. If soul-vision be the chief matter, why work at all? Above all, why engage in such a terrible work as this warfare of kindred? Were it not better to rest in soul-vision, where all is peace?

To this doubt, as to those that preceded it, Krishna now addresses himself. It might be well to rest in soul-vision, withdrawing from all work and warfare, were it possible to do so. But it is impossible. A mere withholding of the hands is not the real Cessation; for where the hands are withheld, the mind still works, the desires are busy, the little voices of lust and wrath are clamorous. Rest lies not here. All life is in motion forever. To escape from motion we should have to escape from the One Life; and that is forever impossible.

Not work and warfare bind us, but the attitude of the heart. There is that mysterious power called Desire, which would draw all things to itself, which would absorb the life of all things within its reach, drawing them vampire-like into its circle. This is what binds the heart and soul. Desire is the enemy; lust is the enemy; wrath is the enemy; selfishness is the enemy. Desire, selfishness, has created, as it were, a whirlpool, a backwash in the great river of life; and here sorrow is born and misery and bondage.

Therefore let him purify his heart of Desire. Let him purge Desire thoroughly from his heart, so that not a trace or stain may remain.

Then shall he find the secret: that work and rest are one. Right work with the Eternal Will means also perfect divine rest and peace. ~~So soul-vision is not opposed to work; but soul-vision is opposed to Desire, to selfishness, to lust and wrath.~~

A word ~~as to the two~~ systems spoken of, the Sankhya and Yoga. There is much to show that the explicit mention of these systems by name, in the third, as in the second book, is a later addition; not as altering the meaning, but as making it clearer and more intelligible to students familiar with the views of the Sankhyas and the Yogas. For us, who are not thus familiar with them, a word of explanation may be helpful.

The Sankhya system, so far as it has come down to us, held that the Spirit of man, Purusha, is chained to Nature, Prakriti, through the forms of Intellect, Buddhi. Regarding Nature through the intellect, the Spirit of man believes himself to be immersed in Nature, and identifies himself with Nature's triple Powers, Substance, Force and Darkness. Thus comes bondage, and intellect is that which ensnares. The Spirit of man must free himself from this snare of false identification; then he will stand alone, eternal, liberated. This is the Sankhya system, here alluded to, and its characteristic words are: Spirit of man, Nature, Intellect and the three Powers, Substance, Force, Darkness; or, in Sanskrit: Purusha, Prakriti, Buddhi, Sattva, Rajas, Tamas.

In part, at least, this system is drawn from the Katha Upanishad, "In the House of Death." In the third section of that ancient tract of the Mysteries, the tenth and eleventh verses read:

The impulses are higher than the sense-powers; emotion is higher than the impulses; understanding is higher than emotion; the soul, the great one, is higher than the understanding; than the great soul the unmanifested is higher; than the unmanifested the Spirit, Purusha, is higher. Than the Spirit none is higher; that is the foundation, the supreme way.

This is the passage freely quoted, at the close of our third book, and introduced by the words of quotation: They say; the equivalent of: It is written. Here we see what is probably the germ of the Sankhya classification quoted from the Katha Upanishad, and given an avowedly Sankhya coloring in the Bhagavad Gita.

According to the Yoga doctrine, God is the great fact of life; God is "all things in all things." And ~~liberation comes by holding in thought~~ to God, and doing all as from God and for God. This is "the way of works," or "the way of union through works," of the Yogas. And

the perception of God is said to come through inspiration, or illumination, or soul-vision, for which the word ~~Buddhi~~ is used.

Thus in the Sankhya system ~~Buddhi~~ is the name of the power that binds; in the Yoga system, it is the name of the power that makes free. The same word is used in quite opposed senses. And a part of the difficulty in translating the Bhagavad Gita lies in this, that we must be able to see in which of these two opposed senses the word is used, each time it occurs.

The truth is, there is a surface opposition, not a fundamental one. For each of our powers alternately binds and frees us. It frees us and lifts us, when we are below it; it binds us, if we try to rise above it, without mastering its lesson. And just such a contradiction as this, which is in truth no contradiction, is the theme of this book of the Gita. We are to be liberated from bondage to works; yet this liberation is not reached by ceasing from works.

INTRODUCTION TO BOOK IV.

The Bhagavad Gita is made of many threads entwined together. The primary motive, the dismay of Arjuna on the field of fratricidal war, is always kept in sight, though subordinated to the more universal motive, the battle of the soul for liberation. That is the perpetual theme; and just as the soul turns this way and that, in doubt and manifold perplexity, before the path becomes clear to it, so does this scripture turn this way and that, meeting doubt after doubt, resolving perplexity after perplexity.

But another aim is held in view. From time to time a chapter of the Mystery doctrine is dropped in, as it were, into the main progression of the poem, in a way not at first evidently related to the immediate problem of the soul. In this way we have two parts of the Mystery doctrine set forth in the present book: the transmission of the Mystery doctrine through certain specially gifted and qualified races; and the doctrine of Avatars, or divine incarnations, through which the teaching of the Mysteries is from time to time renewed and restored.

As to the first theme: the transmission of the Mystery doctrine through certain races, Krishna says that he declared this teaching to the Solar lord, who told it to Manu, from whom it was handed down, through Ikshvaku to the Rajanya sages. There is really a profound meaning in every word of this. Beginning at the nearer end of the chain, the Rajanyas, or Rajputs, are the great warrior race of ancient India, a red or bronze-colored race akin to the ancient Egyptians, and to one element among the ancient Chaldeans. To this red warrior race belonged Vishvamisra, seer of the Gayatri and Rishi of the third circle of the Rig Veda hymns; to the same race belonged the great teachers of the most ancient Upanishads; to the same race belonged Rama, esteemed a divine incarnation, and Krishna himself, also esteemed an Avatar. And in later ages to this same race belonged not only prince Siddhartha the Compassionate, known as Gautama Buddha, but the greatest of the

Buddha's disciples; among others, those who carried the Buddha's teaching of the Good Law northward through the Himalayas into Tibet. Therefore this declaration of Krishna's, that the Mystery teaching, the secret doctrine, as he calls it, was handed down from master to disciple among the Rajanya or Rajput sages, has a most defined and significant meaning, and is the clue to much of the mystical history of the East, involving Egypt and Chaldea, as well as India, and in later ages China and Tibet, and the lands, further to the East, like Burma, Siam, Korea and Japan, which received the doctrine from India.

Again, we are in this fourth book initiated into the doctrine of Avatars, or divine incarnations, which is the complement of the transmission of the Mystery doctrine. For through these Avatars the Mystery doctrine has, in fact, been revealed to the world in age after age, just as Krishna says; and in every case we can trace the river of mystical teaching back to its source in some great Teacher, who not only taught, but in his own person lived, the Mystery doctrine. From such as these the world has drawn all its spiritual religions, without exception; and there is much mystical history of this character in the progression of the great race which Krishna indicates: the race from which came the red Rajputs or Rajanyas.

Krishna then returns to the problem of the soul and its struggle for liberation, and uses the thought of the divine incarnation to make one aspect of that struggle clear. He suggests the twofold character of such a divine incarnation: first, the Great Soul, which dwells perpetually in the highest meditation, in the sunlight of the Eternal; and then the personal apparition of that same Great Soul, which appears as man among men, passing through the gates of birth, and suffering mortality. It is, in his degree, the same thing with the seeker for spiritual life. There is the divine Soul, the Higher Self; there is also the personal self, which suffers and bears the burden of the conflict. By discerning the truth as to these two, the Immortal and the mortal, the thick cloud on the path will be lifted, and the perplexity concerning work and abstinence from work will be resolved. Whatever comes from the personal self, and is done for the personal self, whether against the Higher Self, or the Self in others, is "work which binds," and from this he shall abstain. Whatever comes from the Higher Self, and makes for the Higher Self, whether in oneself or in others, is work that makes free, and is therefore to be carried out.

Again, Krishna uses the great thought of Sacrifice, and the eastern ceremony of sacrifice, to impart further light. Let every act be done

as a sacrifice to the Most High, and thus all bonds binding acts to the personal self will be cut; thus all acts will become expressions of the divine Will, of the will of the Higher Self. And every aspect of sacrifice is thus touched and illumined, the formal worship of the ritualist being irradiated with spiritual light. "Blessed are they who eat of the leavings of the sacrifice" means much more than the subsistence of the priests on the offerings of the faithful. It means that every act, every work, must be done primarily with the thought of sacrifice to the Most High; and that this consecrated work will bring to him who offers it the most ample reward "even in this present world," so that he thus becomes an "eater of the leavings of the sacrifice;" nourished in spirit, heart, mind and body by the reward which his sacrifice brings to him, under the Law. But greatest of all is the sacrifice of wisdom, and "he who is perfected in union, in due time finds wisdom within his own soul."

INTRODUCTION TO BOOK V.

The Spirit of man is free and perfect; the Mind is other than the Spirit, and through the Mind comes bondage: this is the teaching of the Sankhyas. Therefore they see the way of liberation in a clear discerning of the lonely Spirit of man, which thus stands apart from all the works of body and mind and heart. For them, the first step on the way is discernment of the Spirit; and this perception brings renunciation in thought of all that is other than the Spirit. Thus through renunciation made in thought the Sankhyas seek the Way.

The followers of Yoga, the way of Union, seek to gain soul-vision of the Supreme. Then resting heart and thought in that vision, they do all things for the Supreme, seeing in all their acts nothing but the work of the Supreme.

These two ways Krishna has set forth to Arjuna; and Arjuna is confused, unable to discern between them. Therefore he asks Krishna to tell him which is better, the way of renunciation or the way of work in union with the Supreme.

Krishna tells him that these two ways are not different; they are both views of the one Way which leads to Nirvana, to union with the Eternal. Arjuna need not choose between them, for in following the one he treads both.

For the follower of Sankhya who, in all sincerity, has gained intuitive vision of the Spirit of man, and has thereby perceived that all outer works are other than the Spirit, has indeed found the Supreme that the follower of Yoga seeks. And in attributing all reality to the Spirit, and holding all else as unreal, he has indeed made the great renunciation of all desires that dwell in the heart. The Spirit alone is real. All else is let go.

The follower of Yoga, his heart full of the Supreme, attributes all to the Supreme, every work of body and mind and heart. Only the Eternal is, and all things are of the Eternal.

What is, then, the difference between these two ways? And if they be the same, how can Krishna say that the way of Union is the more excellent way?

The answer would seem to be this: The Sankhyas seek to put perception first, to make insight precede the will; to liberate thought first, and then, through liberated thought, to free themselves from bondage in act.

The followers of Yoga, on the other hand, put first the will, enkindled by fervor; and seek, through the victory of the will, to gain pure vision of the Soul. ~~They do the will of the Supreme, trusting that later they will win the vision of the Eternal.~~

This would seem to be the wiser way, nearer to the essential being of man. The will must come first; then wisdom follows. Act comes before insight. Through work comes experience; from experience comes knowledge.

The one way is positive, that of the followers of Yoga. The other way is negative, the way which is followed by the Sankhyas. That would seem to be the difference. The Yogas follow will and intellect. The Sankhyas follow intellect and will. For each, both powers must be present to insure success; it is only a question of the preponderance of the one or the other. The difference is no greater than that. Both are good ways. Both lead to Nirvana, to union with the Eternal.

INTRODUCTION TO BOOK VI.

In Yoga, as in Sankhya, it is all a question of the twofold nature of man; that marvelous paradox of blended angel and demon. The Sankhya speaks of the Higher Self as the Spirit, alone, lonely and pure, and of the lower self as the Mind, perpetual breeder of confusion. For the follower of Yoga, there is the same twofold enigma: the personal self on the one hand, the Supreme on the other; our marvelous being embracing both.

The present Book views the matter from the standpoint of Yoga, as the preceding did from that of Sankhya. For the follower of Yoga, the great thing is, to find in his heart the dim spark of the Supreme, the beginning of the small, old Path, that leads to immortal life. Finding within that spark, that Path, let him give his whole heart and life and soul to it, forgetting all else, and no longer obeying the desire of the personal self for one or another indulgence. Then, as he watches with faithful worship, the spark of pure divine consciousness in the heart will grow; the light will gather strength, and begin to illumine the secrets of his immortality. The Supreme will begin to fill the world for him, and all things will appear to him as part and parcel of the Supreme. Such a one will be lifted above himself; his consciousness will no longer dwell wholly in the personal self, but will shine out in the spiritual realm above the personal self, revealing mysteries. And that higher realm will become for him a dwelling-place, above the waters of birth and death.

There are the two parts of the Way: the finding of the Supreme within the heart, through reverent aspiration and obedience; and then, the ruling and dominating of the personal self by that new-found Lord. The task is not easy, nor is it to be compassed in a day. Difficult will be the struggle against the personal self, its desires and hates, its sense of separateness from others, as possessing separate fortunes and a separate fate. Only the divine power within can meet and master the headstrong will of the personal self, whose minister, Mind, ever

suggests subtle and plausible pretexts for disobedience. The contest is age-long, calling for high faith and valor, and a deep patience, which will accept no defeat, and ever renews the fight, even when it seems hopeless.

The incidents and aspects of the battle are here detailed, with eloquence and endless richness of symbol. Every sentence speaks some intimate truth of the contest, describes some landmark of the Way. Only those who have faithfully made the sacrifice and entered on the path can understand how deep and perfect is the insight, the vision of the Way here recorded. They must learn within themselves something of the Peace, which comes after the first great victory over the personal self; of the Silence, which is indeed the voice of the Soul; of that firm Control of the Mind by the Higher Self, so that the Mind, from being unstable and inconstant, shall become steady as an unruffled lake, mirroring at last the wisdom that is from above.

The battle is long and arduous. If renouncing the world, one has entered that battle, yet through the obstinate subtlety of the Mind has won no final victory, has such a one lost both worlds, giving up this, and yet not finding the other?

This question of Arjuna, Krishna answers by declaring the law of the Soul. He who has sought the Supreme is guarded by the Supreme, even through the waters of death. The contest bravely begun will be taken up again and carried on, in days to come, under other skies. None can lose the Way of the Supreme, whose heart is set on that Way in love. For greatest of all powers that make for advance upon the Way is genuine and unfeigned love of the Divine. This is really the heart of faith, of peace, of silence, of control; of all the treasures that are brought forth from the store of divinity for the enrichment of the pure heart.

INTRODUCTION TO BOOK VII.

In the sixth book, the Teaching of Union was unfolded, the path of those who follow Yoga. It was shown that they first perceive the divine spark in the heart, and, watching with ardent love and aspiration, listening to each faintest admonition of the divine, finally behold that spark grow to the infinite Light.

The seventh book takes up the question of the way in which the disciple shall learn to recognize that divine Light; and here we come to a distinctive quality of the Indian wisdom, as compared with other schools and ideals of sacred study. The wisdom of India lays great stress on purified understanding, as supplementing the right attitude of the heart; and again and again effort is made, with splendid richness of luminous power, to kindle that side of the soul which understands, as well as that side which aspires and loves.

The need of this we can see, if we watch certain forms of religion founded and inspired by great Teachers of wisdom. Resting almost wholly on aspiration, on the will that makes for righteousness, these forms of faith are splendidly effective for those who, with the full faith of disciples, carry out with closest devotion each least command of the Master. These faithful, leading the life, come to know the doctrine. But besides these devoted disciples there are always many who try to master the teaching with the understanding; and if the understanding be not trained and illumined, they are very prone, even through the excess of their zeal, to take uncomprehended words of the Master, and weave them into a thousand fantastic webs of theology, in which their own feet will presently be caught. Our western world has suffered greatly from this imperfect training of the understanding, deficient in the very power which is so characteristic of the Indian schools. If that power be gained, if the understanding be cleared, illumined, and led ever toward universals, then it becomes a wonderful helper along the path, everywhere making easier the task of the spiritual will, removing stumbling-blocks and making straight the path of immortal life.

If the understanding be not thus cleared and illumined, it may catch every gleam of intuition and spiritual light, only to distort that gleam, to light with it the false pictures of the lower mind, thus filling the spiritual life with images of material things. Thus are painted the material heavens that fill so great a space in certain forms of faith, and thus comes it that the Most High is represented with purely human qualities, revengeful, jealous, threatening punishment like some despot of a down-trodden land.

From these erring theologies there ever comes a reaction and a protest, and, confounding the substance with the form, men of strong unillumined mind reject both faith and fable, and build up speculative materialisms, which increase the sum of human pain, the dread of death, the unendurable sorrow of separation.

For these ills, there is no cure like wisdom, no available cure so potent as the ancient wisdom of India. And in all that wisdom, there is no treasure so precious as the thought of the Supreme as the Highest Self of all beings. If the Supreme be indeed my Highest Self, then I can at once comprehend those admonitions of the heart which come to me from within, ever urging me to transcend myself, to give up the lower for the higher, to lose my life that I may find it. These are the commands of what I shall be to what I am; the orders of the real Self to the lesser self, its minister. If that supreme truth of the divine Self be held in the heart, it makes all injunctions of faith and sacrifice intelligible, reasonable, self-evident.

If the Most High be the Supreme Self of all beings, then can I immediately understand why I must love my neighbor; for the Self of one is the Self of both; there is but one Self, of which love is the inherent being, the essential nature.

These two thoughts, which are one, form the heart of the Indian wisdom, here marvelously set forth in the teaching of Krishna to Arjuna.

INTRODUCTION TO BOOK VIII.

The opening verses of this book exemplify something we have already noted: the manner in which general topics of the Mystery Teaching are introduced in the course of the dialogue. We shall have a second instance in this book.

Here, the theme is the Manifestation of the Universe, or, to speak more truly, the Spiritual Structure of the Universe; since in part it is never manifested. This ideal structure of the Universe, according to the Mystery Teaching here unfolded, rests on the Eternal, in Sanskrit "Para-brahma," which is everlasting Being, undivided, unmanifested, unchanging. Within this Supreme Eternal arises the first Pair or Duality, here called "Self-conscious Life" on the one side, and the "Emanating Power" on the other. These might be called the positive and negative sides of the First Logos, to use the Greek term. Through the action of this first Duality, we have a further manifestation, which we may call the Second Logos. It is again divided into positive and negative sides, the former being called the "Individual Spirit," and the latter the "Highest Existence." Both are subject to change, and they are, in a certain sense, the field of Evolution; since manifested life consists of the experiences of individualised spirit in contact with existence, through manifold transformations, until the hour strikes for its return to the bosom of the Infinite Spirit.

To this return the Teacher passes: "Who remembers Me at the time of the end, comes to My Being." And we have been told that he will remember that Being at the time of going forth from the body, who has set his heart on the Divine throughout his whole life. Where the treasure has been stored up, there will the heart be at the time of the end.

The teaching of the ideal structure of the Universe is then supplemented by that of the Days and Nights of Brahma, each lasting for a thousand ages. At the dawn of Day manifested beings go forth; at the coming of Night, they return again to the fold. And there is the Unmanifest, which goes not out, but remains in the great Peace for ever.

Toward the close of this book, we have a passage, which, as it stands, may well be unintelligible: that ~~concerning the Two Ways~~. As given in this book, the form is slightly altered from the Upanishad original, which is as follows:

"Born in the fire of birth, man lives his life-span, and so dies. They bring him to the pyre, and in this fire the bright Powers offer man as the sacrifice; from that sacrifice man arises, of the color of the sun. They who know this, and they who in this forest worship in faith and truth, they indeed rise in the flame of the fire; from the flame they go to the day; from the day to the moonlit weeks; from the moonlit weeks to the summer months; from the months to the world of the bright Powers; from the world of the bright Powers to the sun; from the sun to the lightning; and when they have entered the lightning, a Spirit Mind-born, drawing near, leads them to the worlds of the Eternal; in those worlds of the Eternal beyond the highest they dwell, and for them there is no return.

"But they who win worlds by sacrifice, gifts and penance, they arise in the smoke of the pyre; from the smoke they go to the night; from the night to the moonless weeks; from the moonless weeks to the winter months; from the winter months to the world of the Fathers; from the world of the Fathers to the moon, and gaining the moon, they become food, the bright powers consume them, as the lunar lord waxes and wanes. When they have fulfilled their time, they return through the ether, from the ether to the air, from the air to rain, from rain to the earth, where, becoming food, they are sacrificed in the fire of man, born in the fire of woman, and, rising up again in this world, they thus have their return."

The fire and smoke, day and night, moonlit and moonless weeks, summer and winter, sun and moon, the world of the bright Powers, the world of the Fathers, are, as it were, the positive and negative poles of a series of ascending planes. Those who are bound by self-seeking, typified here by acts of ritual religion, are drawn in each plane to the negative pole. In the "lunar world," the paradise between death and birth, their "merit" enters into the substance of the higher Self, and thus they are said to be consumed by the bright Power. And when their time in paradise is ended, they pass downward again, through the same planes, now symbolised as ether, air, water and earth; and so re-enter this world through the gates of birth. But those who are not bound by self-seeking, "who worship in faith and truth in this forest," are drawn at death to the positive pole of each plane, and so they ascend to the Sun and the Lightning, where they are met by a Spirit Mind-born, who leads them to the worlds of the Eternal, whence they return no more.

Compare the words of the Seer of the Apocalypse: "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God. . . ."

INTRODUCTION TO BOOK IX.

The ninth is, perhaps, the simplest, the most direct, the most eloquent book in this whole scripture. It is full of pure religious feeling, clear intuition. Perhaps the closest approach to its essence, among modern writers, is this passage of Emerson :

"There is one Mind common to all individual men. Every man is an inlet to the same and to all of the same. . . . Who hath access to this universal Mind, is a party to all that is or can be done, for this is the only and sovereign agent. . . . Of the works of this mind, history is the record. . . ."

And again: "The Supreme Critic on the errors of the past and the present, and the only prophet of that which must be, is that great nature in which we rest, as the earth lies in the soft arms of the atmosphere; that Unity, that Oversoul, within which every man's particular being is contained and made one with all others; that common heart, of which all sincere conversation is the worship. . . ."

Throughout this scripture, as in many scriptures, the Teacher speaks for the Oversoul, speaks as the Oversoul, with which his inner Self is at one. And it is evident that Krishna identifies the Oversoul, as which he speaks, with the Atma, the supreme Self, the Life, of the older Upanishads. Here is a part of the Hymn to Life, from the "Upanishad of the Questions":

"Thou, Life, as Lord of beings, movest in the germ; and thou thyself art born from it. And to thee, Life, these beings bring the offering; thou who art set firm through the lives.

"Thou art the tongued flame of the bright ones; the first oblation of the fathers. Thou art the law of the sages; the truth of sacrificial priests.

"Thou art the Thunderer, Life, with his brightness; thou art the storm-god, the preserver. Thou movest in the mid space as the sun; thou art master of the stars. . . ."

In the passage from the greatest Upanishad, quoted in the Introduc-

tion to the eighth book, the passage on the Two Ways, we saw that those who follow ritual worship go by the lunar path to paradise, and that, when their "merit" is consumed, they return again. They are contrasted with those who worship in faith and truth, who follow the solar path and return no more, finding full liberation. It is significant to find exactly the same contrast in the twentieth and twenty-first verses of our ninth book: "The men of the Three Vedas, gaining Lord Indra's paradise, eat divine feasts of the gods in heaven. They, having enjoyed that wide heavenly world, on the waning of their merit enter the mortal world. Thus putting their trust in the threefold Vedic law, they gain a reward that passes away."

This is the deep line of cleavage, lying at the root of the religions of India, between the Mystery Teaching of the Red Rajanyas or Rajputs, and the ritual worship of the White Brahmins, which at first knew nothing of the Mystery Teaching, nothing of rebirth, nothing of liberation.

The essence of the teaching of this book would seem to be this:

We recognize the divine soul first within the inner chamber of our own consciousness, a something higher and holier than ourselves, which makes itself known to us in divine communion. Steadily, as we watch and worship, the light grows, until it becomes the infinite Light. The soul widens and deepens, until we recognize it as the infinite Soul.

Finding it in ourselves, we find it also in our brothers, and so are drawn together in the bonds of brotherhood and fellowship. Brotherly love thus unites all humanity in one, and that one a manifestation of the infinite Soul.

In Nature too, we recognize the same loved face. Wherever we turn, toward the green earth, the mountains, or the quiet stars, we see everywhere the handiwork of that one Soul.

Thus in the worlds about us, in the hearts of our brothers, in the inmost chamber of the heart, we find the soul, the deep and infinite life, the everlasting. For the soul we are to live, seeing in our every condition the arranging hand of the soul; recognizing in all our tasks the work set us by the soul; doing all things for the soul with a great rejoicing that the partition wall is broken down, and the twain are become one. The teacher declares, speaking as the soul:

"He who with love gives Me a leaf, a flower, a fruit, or water, this gift of love I accept from him. . . . Whatever thou doest, whatever thou eatest, whatever thou offerest, whatever thou givest, do it as an offering to Me . . ."

Compare these passages from another scripture:

“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. . . .”

“And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward. . . .”

“And the king shall answer and say unto them, verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me.”

INTRODUCTION TO BOOK X.

In the tenth book, the teacher carries forward in a very vital way the teaching of the Spiritual Structure of the Universe. Having already shown how, within the undivided, unchanging Eternal there arises the Logos, he tells how within the Logos there appear the Seven Seers and the Four Lords of mankind. The Seven Seers are, as it were, assemblies of spiritual life, the seven sources from which flow seven rays of souls, embracing the totality of living things in their varying degrees. The Four Lords of mankind are the regents of the four directions of space, the guardians of the manifested world. In a sense they are representatives of the positive forces among the Seven Seers, the intervening three being regarded as negative. Then comes a most vital link in the teaching. As the seven spiritual rays pour downward from the Seven Seers, they are met by the Awakened, those among manifested souls, in whom the light has grown bright; and these Awakened ones also enter into the life of the Logos, forming an undivided hierarchy with the life of the Seven Seers. The Awakened ones hand down the teaching of the Logos from Master to disciple, imparting the knowledge of the soul-vision. Over all broods the Logos, bending down, yet retaining its own nature, and driving away the darkness born of unwisdom, with the flaming lamp of wisdom.

Compare with this the vision of the Apocalypse:

"And after this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb (the Logos), clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice saying, Salvation to the Eternal, which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the Messengers stood round about the throne, and about the Seniors, and the Four Lives, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped the Eternal. . . . These are they which came out of the great trial, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore they are before the throne of the Eternal, and serve him day and night in his

temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

The Apocalypse depicts the Eternal, and the Logos, enthroned amid the rainbow; round the throne are the seven lamps of fire, which are the Seven Spirits of God; and the Four Lives, full of eyes before and behind. And drawn near to this celestial host are the Seniors and the Messengers, elect of humanity, drawn from every nation under heaven.

The Bhagavad Gita represents the Eternal, and the Logos resting within the everlasting Being; the Seven Seers, and the Four Lords of mankind. Rising toward them and meeting them are the Awakened, with their disciples, joying and rejoicing in the Logos for ever.

With Arjuna's description of the Logos: "Most excellent Spirit, Creator of beings, Lord of beings, God of gods, Ruler of the world! Thou alone art worthy to declare Thy forms. . . ." we may compare these words of St. Paul: "Blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords: Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; Whom no man hath seen, nor can see. . . ."

The reply of Krishna is so beautiful and full of poetry that it needs no comment.

INTRODUCTION TO BOOK XI.

One might call the eleventh book the Book of the Transfiguration. It holds its place in the entire work, not arbitrarily, but in accordance with the laws of spiritual life. For the Transfiguration portrays a certain real event, and has, therefore, had its fitting symbol in the Mystery Teachings of all times and all lands.

To take two instances. It is depicted in the Book of Job, by the Lord answering out of the whirlwind, after the trials of the patriarch have been successfully overcome. Again, the Transfiguration has its parallel, and a very close one, in the Apocalypse:

"I was in the spirit . . . and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last . . . and I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned as in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.

"And when I saw him I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last; I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and death . . ."

The truth would seem to be that, at a certain point in spiritual life, the ardent disciple, who has sought in all things to bring his soul into unison with the great Soul, who has striven to bring his will to likeness with the Divine Will, passes through a marked spiritual experience, in which the great Soul draws him upward, the Divine Will raises his consciousness to oneness with the Divine Consciousness; for

a time, he perceives and feels, no longer as the person, but as the Oversoul, gaining a profound vision of the divine ways of life, and feeling with the infinite Power, which works through life and death alike, through sorrow and joy, through union and separation, through creation, destruction and recreation. The awe and mystery which surround that great unveiling have set their seal on all who have passed through it.

Did space permit, it would be possible to show that the symbols used to portray this divine event correspond, part by part, whether we draw them from the Egyptian Mysteries, from the Bhagavad Gita, or from the Apocalypse. We have made the general resemblance between the two latter sufficiently evident, however; and those to whom the theme appeals, may work out the details for themselves. The second vision in the Apocalypse, which we quoted in part in the Introduction to Book X, should be taken into account, and the two together compared with the Transfiguration in the Bhagavad Gita.

It should be pointed out that the dramatic situation in the two Scriptures, the Bhagavad Gita and the Apocalypse, is identical. In both, we have, first the Master addressing the disciple. Then the disciple receives the power of divine vision, or is "in the spirit," as John says, in introducing both visions. Then comes the Transfiguration, in which the Master's Spirit becomes, as it were, the channel through which the disciple is initiated into the Oversoul. And, as a result of the Transfiguration, the disciple falls in awe and reverence at the feet of the Master, and the Master raises him up, encouraging and consoling him. Indeed the words: "Awake! Arise!" mark the closing scene of this divine event, according to most ancient Scriptures.

One word more. The symbolism used, whether in the Bhagavad Gita or in the Apocalypse, is as strange as it is tremendous. We have in both the Ancient of Days, with eyes as of flaming fire, and with a tongued flame proceeding out of his mouth. In the one, we have the vision of Diety, many-armed and many-eyed; in the other, we have the many-winged Lives, with innumerable eyes; in both, we have the rainbow-colored halo round the throne, which is beset with thunderings and lightnings. This tremendous symbolism has its purpose, and its very strangeness may remind us that we are in presence of an effort to tell of the things of other worlds in the imagery of this. Keeping these principles in mind, one may reach a measure of success in grasping the significance of this mystical and apocalyptic vision.

INTRODUCTION TO BOOK XII.

This book lays down the practical rule for the disciple. The way is found. The disciple must now enter on it in earnest. He has had the great vision of the Divine, working through life and death, joy and sorrow, union and separation; and, coming back to himself, he hears the words: Awake! Arise! He must now take up his life and live it under divine law.

But there may be disciples of many types, of many temperaments, of many degrees of attainment. Something must be said for each of these. There is the broad distinction between the contemplative and the active life and character; what one might call the Eastern and the Western temperament. Arjuna states the case of these two: those who worship the unmanifest Eternal, and those who, ever united and full of love, draw near to the Master,—which of these follows the better way?

We may illustrate these two ways by passages from the Scriptures of two other religions.

First, the abstract, contemplative way, which one may call the way of the Eastern spirit. This we may illustrate by a sentence from one of the Buddha's sermons:

"We may have, O disciples, the case of one who, himself subject to birth and death, perceives the wretchedness of what is subject to birth and death, and longs for the incomparable security of a Nirvana free from birth and death; himself subject to old age, disease, death, sorrow, dissolution, perceives the wretchedness of what is subject to dissolution, and longs for the incomparable security of a Nirvana free from dissolution. This, O disciples, is a noble longing!"

Now the concrete, practical way of devotion, which we may call the way of the Western spirit. We may illustrate it from one of the Sermons of Jesus.

"He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that

loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him . . . If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

The rest of the book is so simple, direct and practical that it needs no comment.

INTRODUCTION TO BOOK XIII.

It has been suggested that the eighteen books of the Bhagavad Gita fall naturally into three groups of six books each; and that the first group of six books corresponds in general to the stage of Aspiration, the second group of six to the stage of Illumination, the third six to the stage of Realization. Without pushing this thought too far, we may recognize, in a general way, that the earlier books of this divine poem are concerned with the first halting steps on the path of life; the middle culminates in the Transfiguration of the eleventh book, and the closing part of the poem is made up of teachings worked out in detail, for use in daily life. In general, these passages of practical teaching rest on the Upanishads and the Sankhya teaching of Kapila, as developed and embodied in the later Vedanta. We cannot speak definitely of the dates either of the Upanishads or of Kapila. We can only say that both certainly belong to a period long before Buddha, and that the Upanishads are much older than Kapila. We can further say, with some confidence, that Kapila's great contribution to Indian wisdom was the division of life into the two opposing camps of Spirit and Nature: Purusha and Prakriti, and the further division of Nature under the Three Powers of Substance, Force and Darkness: Sattva, Rajas, Tamas.

This division is not found in the great Upanishads, but it corresponds closely to something that is found there. The antithesis between Spirit and Nature answers to the Upanishad distinction between Self and not-Self. And the Three Powers are closely related to the Three Worlds of the Upanishads. In the development of the Vedanta in the period after the great Upanishads, much of the teaching of Kapila was adopted, and we find the two strands interwoven throughout the Bhagavad Gita, with a strong coloring of the devotional Yoga school added. Shankaracharya fully approves of this adoption, and uses Sankhya classifications throughout his works, both commentaries and original teachings. The reason would seem to be that Kapila, while not giving forth the great traditional teaching of the Mysteries embodied in the Upani-

shads, nevertheless developed his philosophy in close harmony with the Mystery Teaching, and developed it with marvelous intellectual cogency and lucidity. Kapila was in many ways the prototype of Kant, and his purely intellectual work served as a basis for spiritual teaching, just as Kant's work serves as the foundation for later idealism.

We therefore find the closing books of the Bhagavad Gita strongly colored by the thought of Kapila; and his division of life into Spirit and Nature, with Nature divided under the Three Powers, is used as the basis of instruction.

The first three verses of Book XIII divide life into objective and subjective, the "field," and the "knower of the field." This is in effect Kapila's division between Nature and Spirit; but, while Kapila seems to contemplate a countless number of isolated Spirits, the Vedanta, in adopting his teaching, greatly improved it, by seeing, under all these individuals, a larger unity, the Spirit Supreme, the one Self of all beings. This presence of the Oversoul is ~~finely expressed~~ here: "Know Me to be the knower of the field, in all fields, O son of Bharata."

The fourth verse, which refers to the Brahma-Sutras, the great analytical work commented on by Shankaracharya, is of later date, and has been inserted by some lover of philosophical orthodoxy, a little jealous, perhaps, of the prominence given to the rival Sankhya system.

The fifth and sixth verses cover what the Upanishads would call the two lowest planes of consciousness, the physical and the psychic; the mental and emotional energies being included, as they ought to be, under the psychic.

A group of five verses follow, which set forth "the fruits of the spirit," corresponding to the third plane of consciousness of the Upanishads, the plane of "dreamlessness," of moral and spiritual nature, above the dreamland of the psychic plane. These five verses form, in fact, a fine moral code for the disciple, who must grow in just these qualities of "humility, sincerity, patience, reverence, selflessness." Every word of these five verses should be dwelt on, till the spiritual principle involved is discerned and assimilated.

Then come six verses, from the twelfth to the seventeenth inclusive, which finely and wonderfully set forth the fourth plane of consciousness of the Upanishads, the direct perception of the Logos, the Oversoul. The Logos is the "Light of lights," undivided among beings, though seeming to be divided; the power and consciousness of the Logos are everywhere: "with hands and feet everywhere, with eyes

everywhere," in the fine symbolism of the poem. And the union of individual consciousness with this divine consciousness of the Logos is well declared to be the goal of wisdom, the aim of life.

Then Detachment is taught, first along the line of Sankhya thought, which regards the Spirit as the disinterested spectator, whose liberation is to be gained by perception that personal acts and desires are not of the Spirit. By thus raising our consciousness to the one Life, we stand apart from the personal in us, and work only the works of the Life, the works of the Father. The teaching of Detachment is stated also in terms of the Yoga and Vedanta schools, the reconciliation of the three bringing us to the close of the book.

INTRODUCTION TO BOOK XIV.

Book XIV carries the Sankhya teaching a step farther. The development of the manifested universe is first traced to the united action of two powers: the Logos, as Father, and the Great One, Mahat, as Mother. In the words of Krishna, speaking as the Logos, "Mahat is the womb, and I am the Father who gives the seed."

From Mahat, thus enkindled by the Logos, arise Three Powers, Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. In their cosmic aspect they are the Substance of manifested life, the Force which expands that Substance into myriad forms, and the Darkness in which Substance is expanded into manifestation. From the point of view of individual life, the Three Powers seem practically identical with the three bodies of such Vedanta works as the Tattva Bodha. Sattva corresponds to the Causal body, "the cause and substance of the other two bodies," as Shankara calls it; Rajas corresponds to the Psychic body, the body of mental and emotional life; and Tamas corresponds to the Physical body, the dark field, which is to be illuminated by the five-fold powers of sense and action, projected into it from the psychic realm. For without the psychic, the physical body is unconscious and inert.

Beginning with the fifth verse, this parallelism between the Three Powers and the three bodies is developed in several practical directions. First there is the question of bondage. Beginning with the lowest, the power of Darkness, or the physical body, we are told that it binds "through heedlessness, indolence and sleep," the mere grossness and inertness of the natural life, before it has been stirred and awakened into keen personal consciousness by the psychic energies of mental and emotional existence. When this stage is reached, when personal psychic life is developed, the cause of bondage changes. The binding force is now "desire, thirst, attachment;" and liberation is to be gained by overcoming these. Bondage through desire, thirst and attachment is what is called Karma in the more restricted sense; and when we pass beyond the psychic personal stage, we are free from Karma in that sense. The

third stage is that of the Causal self, which is immortal, in that it is above the birth and death of the body; but which binds, in that it is the dwelling-place of individualism, of the separate consciousness of the Higher Ego. This "binds through the bond of pleasure and the bond of knowledge," that is, through the attraction of happiness for oneself and knowledge for oneself; therefore this stage also must be transcended, in order that the life may become purely spiritual and free, the consciousness blending with the Oversoul, and thus coming into its true and everlasting individuality. Along this path "all silent seers have passed to supreme adeptship; at the creation of the worlds they go not forth, nor do they fail when the worlds are dissolved."

Again, "obscurity, inactivity, sloth, delusion," are the forces of Darkness, of the unawakened physical life. Their underlying principle is inertia, the wish to avoid effort, the longing for "yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep." It is the state of the yet unborn child, or the state of the body in sleep. And the whole of animal life, with its goad of hunger, seems to be designed to overcome this sluggishness, this unwillingness for effort. Until this obscuring and deadening force is overcome, there can be no truly human life; hence its prevalence is said to entail birth "in wombs of delusion."

The psychic tendencies are thus enumerated: "desire of possessions, activity, the undertaking of works, restlessness, longing," all characteristics of the mental and emotional nature. They are the cause of personal Karma, and cause rebirth "among those who are bound by works."

Finally, the powers belonging to the third stage, which corresponds to the Causal body of Shankara, are "light and wisdom;" those who possess them go upward; they enter the stainless worlds of those who know the best. They possess the stainless fruit of works well done. Yet this third stage is only the anteroom to real spiritual life, life in the divine consciousness of the Logos: "when he beholds That which is beyond the Three Powers, he enters into My being; let go by birth and death and age and pain, he reaches immortality."

INTRODUCTION TO BOOK XV.

Book XV is full of echoes from the great Upanishads. To begin with, the simile of the Tree of Life is taken from the second part of the Katha Upanishad, the teaching of Death to Nachiketas. There it is written that: 'Rooted above, with branches below, is this immemorial Tree. It is that bright one, that Eternal; it is called the immortal. In it all the worlds rest; nor does any go beyond it.' This is the original of our opening passage. It is taken from one of the older Upanishads, but it is taken with a difference. As used in Book XV, the image has passed through the mind of Kapila, and has taken on a Sankhya coloring.

For the Tree of the Upanishads is veritably the Tree of Life, whose taste gives immortality; the Logos, rooted above and branching downward. It is the Supreme Self, the immortal spirit. But in the Bhagavad Gita the Tree is transformed. It is now no longer the Tree of Life eternal, but only the Tree of manifested life, rooted not in the Eternal but in Mahat, and branching downward through the three worlds. The tree of our simile is the Ashvattha tree, one of those banyans, from whose huge branches tufts of roots spring forth, descending through the air, and reaching the ground, where they immediately become the source of a new tree, with a life of its own, yet one with the parent tree. This is the meaning of the image: "Downward and upward stretch the branches, grown strong through the Three Powers, and with things of sense for twigs; downward stretch the roots, which bind to works in the world of men."

There is, however, no fundamental difference between this teaching and that of the Upanishad. It is only that the great intellect of Kapila, viewing the manifested universe, discerned between the forms of manifestation and the silent Spirit within them, and set Spirit on the one side, and manifested Nature on the other.

The sixth verse is another echo from the Upanishads. In the teaching of Death to Nachiketas, once more it is written: "This is That,

they think, the ineffable supreme joy. How then may I know whether This shines or borrows light? No sun shines there, nor the moon and stars; nor lightnings, nor fire like this. All verily shines after that shining. From the shining of That, all this borrows light." It is noteworthy that we find exactly the same image in another scripture, the Apocalypse: "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."

The eighth verse again echoes the older teaching, this time in the Upanishad of the Questions: "Life proudly made as if to go out above. And as life goes out, all the others go out, and as life returns, all the others return." And a few verses further down, in the eleventh verse of our book, we have an echo of this passage from the same older scripture: "He warms as fire; as sun, and the rain god; the thunderer, wind, and the earth, substance, the bright one, what is, what is not, and what is immortal."

This triple division into "what is, what is not, and what is immortal," has again suggested the closing verses of our book, ~~from the sixteenth~~ to the end: "there are two Spirits in the world, the changing and the unchanging . . . But the Highest Spirit is other than these, it is the Supreme Self, the everlasting Lord." It is evident that we are dealing with what has been called the threefold form of the Logos, the division of the One into the three stages: the First Logos, the Second Logos, and the Third Logos. The First Logos is the Supreme Spirit; the Second Logos is the Unchanging Spirit; the Third Logos is the Changing Spirit of our poem. The highest form of the Logos is the Oversoul, in which our consciousness is to be blended with the All-consciousness: "Who knows Me thus, free from delusion, loves Me with his whole heart."

INTRODUCTION TO BOOK XVI.

Leaving for a time the threefold division of life according to the Three Powers, Book XVI approaches the moral problem in a more direct and simple way. The main theme of the book is exactly that of the Epistle of St. James :

"The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

§ "But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, psychical, devilish."

One may state the matter thus : The psychical nature lies between the animal in us and the divine. It is the essence of the psychical nature that it will reflect and mirror in its own substance whatever the attention and the will are set on. Therefore if the thoughts are fixed on the appetites of the body, the animal desires and passions, these will be reflected in the psychical nature. And reflected not in their simplicity, as they are in the wild animal life, but mirrored and broken into a thousand images, distorted, exaggerated out of all semblance of natural likeness or natural purpose. Thus the simple animal impulse of self-preservation will become ambition, selfishness, cruelty ; in like manner the animal search for food and water will be mirrored and distorted into psychic gluttony, drunkenness, greed, and the pure animal power of reproduction into lust and passion. This is "the wisdom from beneath," as St. James calls it, the word "wisdom" translating "sophia," which means rather "executive force." This is the impulse which is "earthly, psychical, devilish," or demoniac, as the Bhagavad Gita puts it.

// But if the heart be set on the things of the Spirit, then the psychical nature will reflect and mirror into itself spiritual things. The eternal power of the Spirit will be mirrored as peace, stability ; the oneness of the Spirit, in virtue of which the One Life stands at the heart

of all living things, will mirror itself as gentle charity, as kindly affection one to another, with brotherly love. The ever-living joy of the Spirit will mirror itself as happiness and peace. Thus shall we have that wisdom from above, which is "first pure, then peaceable, gentle, full of mercy, without hypocrisy."

Nor will the direction of thought and will affect the emotional nature only. The intellect will be similarly colored. If the heart be set on the things that are below, then the psychic nature, mirroring the things that are below, will build an intellectual image of a world, material, gross, not ruled by divine law, subject to chance, to death and dissolution. But if the heart be set on the things above, then the intellectual nature will build an image of the world in harmony with the things that are above, and will perceive the world as permeated by divinity, ruled by holy law, made out of the elements of the best in us, and akin to our hearts and souls, not merely to the grossness of our bodies. Thus does our intellectual view of the world depend not at all on logical deductions but on the purity or impurity of our moral natures.

The materialistic mood of mind is dramatically expressed in the passage beginning, "This have I gained to-day; this desire shall I obtain; this much I have, and this shall I have of further wealth; this foe has been slain by me, and I shall slay yet others..." and ending "Thus they say, deluded... and fall into the impure pit of hell."

We cannot fail to be reminded of a similar passage:

"This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, drink, be merry. But God said unto him, Fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee..."

INTRODUCTION TO BOOK XVII.

The early verses of Book XVII may remind us of something we should never forget: that the speech of the Orient is always symbolical; that, for the Eastern mind, the particular always represents the universal, so that each particular symbol stands for a universal truth. This is the principle on which the mystery language is based, in which all true Scriptures are written; for that alone is a true Scripture, whose writer has clear vision of the universal, the One Eternal, and beholds that Eternal in each individual form.

Thus the words: "Those of Substance worship bright deities; those of Force worship deities greedy and passionate; the men of Darkness worship the hosts of darkness," means very much more than that the good worship the Devas, the passionate worship Titans, the sluggish worship ghosts. For we must remember that the Three Powers, Substance, Force, Darkness express much the same truth as the ~~Three Worlds of the Vedantins~~. So that "those of Substance" really means those whose consciousness has been raised to their spiritual nature, and dwells there. They whose consciousness has thus opened in the spiritual world will aspire toward the bright, divine powers of that world. They will "lay up treasure in heaven." And their thought of God will be in harmony with that spiritual world; they will conceive of the awful majesty of the Silent One as the heart of love, mightily working for the final good of all. The men of Force are those whose consciousness dwells in the psychic nature; the realm of emotionalism, of the argumentative mind, of ambition, strife, egotism, self-reference. These will worship all that makes for a like activity, a like vibration in themselves. For all these psychic activities are, in one sense, vibratory perturbations of the psychic body, psychic stimulants, for the obtaining of which physical stimulants are taken. These are the "deities greedy and passionate," worshipped by the "men of Force"; and, in another sense, those who dwell in the psychic realm will picture to themselves deities

greedy and passionate, gods jealous and destructive. This is the impulse which leads men to think that their gods will be served by fierce controversies about the gods of others, by campaigns of persecution, whether bodily or mental, in favor of orthodoxy of whatever color; by attempts to force their views of God down the throats of others; in a word, by every sin against the great law of tolerance. Again, the cause is not mental limitation so much as moral perversity; the consciousness being centered in the psychical nature, which is separatist, self-assertive, prone to hostility and hate.

Then we have, in the enumeration of the Three Foods, another instance of Eastern symbolism. For Food, in the mystery language, is a general name for all experience that is wrought into the nature, food of body, food of mind, food of heart and soul. Those who take into themselves spiritual power, drawing into their hearts the divine life above them, eat spiritual food, the mystical "body of the Lord." This is the symbol on which rests the sacrifice of bread and wine, which was first associated with the death and resurrection of Osiris, and was for ages a mystical rite of Egypt. The body of the sacrificed god is the divine Logos, entered into incarnation, and offering itself inwardly to our souls, in sustenance and support.

This symbolic meaning of food is found in the oldest Upanishads. Thus, in the teaching of the father of Shvetaketu, we read:

"Learn from me, dear, the meaning of hunger and thirst. When a man hungers, as they say, the Waters guide what he eats. And as there are guides of cows, guides of horses, guides of men, so they call the Waters the guides of what is eaten. Thus you must know, dear, that what he eats grows and sprouts forth; and it cannot grow without a root. And where can the root of what he eats be? Where but in the world-food, Earth? And through the world-food, Earth, that has sprouted forth, you must seek the root, the Waters. And through the Waters that have sprouted forth, you must seek the root, Radiance. And through Radiance that has sprouted forth, you must seek the root, the Real. For all these beings, dear, are rooted in the Real, resting in the Real, abiding in the Real."

Here, it is evident, we have the exact equivalent of the teaching of Spirit and the Three Powers. The Real of the Upanishad is Spirit. Radiance is the same as Substance; the Waters are the same as Force; Earth, the world-food, is the same as Darkness. From the Real, the Higher Self, are emanated the spiritual, psychical and animal ~~natures.~~ Or, as the Upanishad says, from the Real the Radiance sprouts forth;

from the Radiance the Waters sprout forth; from the Waters the world-food, Earth, sprouts forth. And each realm of our being is ruled by the realm above it. The experience of the bodily nature is guided and ruled by the powers next above, the psychical or astral powers, while the experience of the psychical nature is ruled by the spiritual powers. Or, as the symbolic language of the Upanishad says:

"When a man hungers, as they say, the Waters guide what he eats. And when a man thirsts, as they say, the Radiance guides what he drinks. And as there are guides of cows, guides of horses, guides of men, so, they say, the Radiance guides the Waters. Thus you must know, dear, that what he drinks grows and sprouts forth; and it cannot grow without a root. And where can the root of what he drinks be? Where, but in the Waters? And through the Waters that sprout forth, you must seek their root, the Radiance. And through the Radiance, dear, that sprouts forth, you must seek its root, the Real. For all these beings, dear, are rooted in the Real, resting in the Real, abiding in the Real. And how these three: the world-food, Earth, the Waters, Radiance, coming to a man, become each threefold, threefold, this has been taught already.

"And of a man who goes forth in death, formative Voice sinks back into Mind; Mind sinks back into vital Breath, vital Breath to Radiance, and Radiance to the higher Divinity. This is the soul, the Self of all that is, this is the Real, this is the Self, That Thou Art, O Shvetaketu."

~~Thus hunger and thirst mean the impulses of bodily and psychical experience. When all experience has been consecrated by sacrifice, so that we see in all things the life of the higher Divinity, then food and drink are also consecrated; all experience becomes divine, and we partake of the mystical bread and wine.~~

The same spirit of symbolism underlies what is further said of gifts, penance and sacrifice: exactly the same spirit that finds expression in the words:

"Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free?"

The teaching of the righteous gift, to one who will not return it, finds a parallel in the words: "But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee..."

INTRODUCTION TO BOOK XVIII.

Though the longest in the poem, Book XVIII needs very little comment. It by no means follows that it needs little study, or that it will scantily repay study. On the contrary, no part of the poem is richer in immediately practical wisdom, in counsel applicable to the needs of daily life. But this counsel students must dig out for themselves, rather than receive it ready-made from a commentator.

The beginning of Book XVIII contains the moral teaching which is most characteristic of the Bhagavad Gita, the teaching which has the distinctive note of Krishna as a spiritual leader. ~~It is the teaching of Renunciation, or of genuine disinterestedness, to express the same thing in another way.~~ The ideal of ancient India has ever been Liberation, whether we speak of the ancient Upanishads, or of the Buddhists, or of their close kinsmen the Jainas. ~~The only question has been as to the way in which Liberation is to be gained.~~ The extremists among the ascetics held that Liberation should be sought by giving up the world in the most literal way, by dwelling in the forest far from human habitations, by living on wild herbs and water, by cutting oneself loose from all intercourse with one's fellow-men. Thus and thus only, said the extremists, can one get free from the bondage of works, which we are ever suffering and ever renewing. In answer to these ascetics, the Buddha taught the doctrine of the Golden Mean, the path of righteousness, gentleness, humanity. ~~To the same problem Krishna had already given an answer equally valid, and with a marked individual coloring. The true way of Liberation, he said, is disinterestedness. Work for the love of the work, and not that you may gain a reward. Work is imperative and not to be escaped; what should be escaped is bondage to work. And it is to be escaped, not by selfish calculations, whether called ascetic or ritual, but by a clear and selfless spirit, by self-forgetfulness, by doing all work as to the Most High, and thus ridding oneself of the heresy of separateness, self-centered vanity and egotism.~~ It may be thought that, when this is done, the individuality becomes pale

and diaphanous. The truth is just the contrary. When this is done, the individuality for the first time ~~has real~~ being, for the first time emerges clearly into the light of day. Genuine happiness, genuine cheerfulness, genuine mirth come first with this clear and disinterested spirit, when all work is done as to the Master, when all self-reference is left behind. This teaching of work with disinterestedness is the first theme of Book XVIII, and the most characteristic moral feature of the Bhagavad Gita.

Then comes a further exposition of the Three Powers, and their application to different phases of life. Here again is most fruitful material for study. The clue already given should be used, it being held in mind that the Three Powers correspond to the Three Bodies, or the Three Worlds of the Vedanta, as set forth, for example, in the Mandukya Upanishad. Students should make the application for themselves. Thus, verse 20 tells us that, when the consciousness has been raised to the spiritual body, as St. Paul calls it, then "one eternal nature will be perceived in all beings, undivided, though beings are divided." In like manner, when the consciousness is centered in the psychic body, one will see "in all beings various natures according to their variety." In other words, the psychic nature sees diversity where the spiritual nature sees unity. The one divides where the other unites. In the same way should be worked out the threefold divisions of work, doer, firmness and happiness set forth in the verses that follow.

Then comes the close of the poem, with its blessing to all who hear and further the same teaching, a blessing which we, as hearers of it, hope to share.

BOOK I.

DHRITARASHTRA SAID:

On the field of the law, on Kuru's field assembled and ready to fight, what did my people, O Sanjaya, and the Pandu host?

SANJAYA SAID:

King Duryodhana, beholding the Pandu army drawn up for battle, coming to Drona, his instructor, addressed to him this word:

Behold, O instructor, this mighty host of the sons of Pandu, marshaled by thy wise pupil, Drupada's son;

Heroes are here, mighty archers, equal to Bhima and Arjuna in battle, Yuyudhana and Virata, and Drupada of the great chariot;

Dhrishtaketu and Chekitana, and Kashi's valorous king; Purujit and Kuntibhoja and Shaiya, bull of men: (5)

The victorious Yudhamanyu and Uttamaujas the valorous, Subhadra's son and the sons of Draupadi, with great chariots all.

Hear now, best of the Twice-born, who are our chiefest men, my army's captains; that thou mayest know their names, I tell them to thee;

Thyself and Bhishma, Karna and Kripa, conqueror in battle, Ashvatthama and Vikarna, and Somadatta's son;

And many other heroes who give their lives for me, variously armed, all skilled in war.

Our force which Bhishma leads is inadequate; their force which Bhima commands is strong; (10)

Therefore, do ye all support Bhishma, holding the several places allotted to you, O worthy warriors!

Then enkindling his ardor the elder Kuru, the martial grandsire, loudly blew his conch-shell, sounding the lion note.

Thereupon sounded conches, drums, great drums, cymbals and trumpets, till the sound grew to a tumult.

Then standing together in their great chariot yoked with white horses, Krishna, slayer of Madhu, and Arjuna, son of Pandu, blew their godlike conches.

He of the flowing hair blew the conch called Fivefold, and the conqueror of wealth blew the God-given; and he of the wolf-maw, terrible in deeds, blew the Reed-note; (15)

King Yudhishthira, the son of Kunti, blew Unending-victory; Nakula and Sahadeva blew the conches Well-sounding and Pearl-flowered;

And the mighty archer, the king of Kashi, and Shikhandin of the great chariot, Dhrishtadyumna, Virata and Satyaka's unvanquished son;

Drupada and the sons of Draupadi, his daughter, O monarch, and Subhadra's son of mighty arms, blew their conches on all hands, on this side and on that;

And the sound pierced the hearts of Dhritarashtra's sons; the din made heaven and earth resound.

Then Pandu's son, he of the monkey-banner, looking toward the sons of Dhritarashtra set over against him, while the arrows were already falling, grasped his bow; (20)

And thus, O monarch, he spoke to him of the flowing hair: Draw up my chariot, O unfallen one, between the two armies;

That I may view those ranged against us ready to fight, with whom I must do battle in this clash of war;

That I may see those who are about to fight, gathered here to work the will of Dhritarashtra's evil-minded son in battle!

SANJAYA SAID:

Krishna of the flowing hair, thus addressed by Arjuna of the crested locks, O son of Bharata, stopping the most excellent chariot between the two armies,

In face of Bhishma and Drona and all the rulers of the earth, spoke thus: Behold the Kurus assembled here, O son of Pritha! (25)

Pritha's son beheld standing there fathers and grandfathers, instructors, uncles, brothers, sons, grandsons and companions,

Fathers-in-law and dear friends in both armies. He, the son of Kunti, viewing all these near kinsmen standing opposed, filled with supreme pity, desponding, spoke thus:

ARJUNA SAID:

Seeing my own kindred here, O Krishna, desiring battle, ranged against each other.

My limbs sink under me, my mouth dries up, trembling besets my body, and my flesh creeps;

My bow Gandiva slips from my hand, my skin burns with fever;
I cannot stand, my heart is confused; (30)

I see contrary omens, O thou of the flowing hair, nor can I look for the better part, if I slay my kindred in battle.

I want not victory, Krishna, nor the kingdom nor its pleasures; for what profit is the kingdom to us, thou lord of the earth; what are feasts, or even life itself?

They for whose sake a kingdom is sought, and its feasts and pleasures, even they are drawn up against us, staking their lives and wealth in battle:

Instructors, fathers, sons and grandsires, uncles, fathers-in-law, grandsons, wives' brothers, kinsmen.

These would I not kill, though killed myself, O slayer of Madhu, even for the kingdom of the three worlds, much less for this earth; (35)

If we strike down the sons of Dhritarashtra, what joy shall we find, thou arouser of men? Sin will follow us if we slay these usurpers.

Therefore, we must not slay the sons of Dhritarashtra, our kinsmen. How can we be happy, if we kill our own kin, O slayer of Madhu?

Even if they, their hearts blinded by greed, see not the evil of family strife, and the crime of the hatred of friends;

How shall we fail to turn back from this sin, we who do see the evil of family strife, O arouser of men?

For when the family is cut off, the immemorial rites of the family perish, and when the rites perish, lawlessness overtakes the whole family;

Overtaken by lawlessness, O Krishna, the women of the family are led astray; when the women are led astray, descendant of Vrishni, there comes mingling of races; (41)

And mingling of races makes for hell for the slayers of family and for their family; for their departed fathers fall, cut off from the offerings of rice-cakes and water.

Through these sins of those who slay their kindred, thus causing impurity of race, the immemorial birth rites and family rites are overthrown;

And for the sons of men whose family rites fail, thou arouser of men, a place in hell is certain. Thus we have heard from our fathers!

Woe is me! We are set on doing a great evil, since through lust of the kingdom and its pleasures, we are ready to slay our own kin. (45)

If Dhritarashtra's sons, weapon in hand, should slay me in battle, weaponless and unresisting, that would be far more easy to bear !

SANJAYA SAID :

Thus speaking Arjuna sank on the floor of the chariot, in the midst of the host, dropping his bow and his arrows, his heart shaken with sorrow.

BOOK II.

SANJAYA SAID:

To him thus full of distress, his eyes perplexed and filled with tears, despondent, the slayer of Madhu spoke this word:

THE MASTER SAID:

Whence has this faint-heartedness in trouble come upon thee, unseemly for a noble, not bringing heaven, inglorious, O Arjuna?

Fall not into impotence, O son of Pritha, for this beseems thee not! Put away this mean faint-heartedness, and arise, O consumer of the foe!

ARJUNA SAID:

How can I fight against Bhishma, how against Drona, with my arrows, O slayer of Madhu, for they are both worthy of honor, O slayer of the foe!

Rather than slay these great ones, worthy of all honor, it were better to eat the bread of beggars in this world; for slaying them, even though they seek my possessions, I should eat feasts sprinkled with blood! (5)

Nor do we know which is heavier for us, whether we conquer or whether they conquer us; for Dhritarashtra's sons are here facing us, slaying whom we should not wish to live.

Overwhelmed with pity and fear of sin I ask thee, for my vision of duty is obscured. Which is better? Tell me clearly! I am thy disciple! Teach me! I appeal to thee!

For I see no way to drive away my grief and this fever in all my powers, though gaining wealth and mastery of the earth without a rival, or even overlordship of the gods!

SANJAYA SAID:

He of the crested locks, consumer of the foe, thus addressing him of the flowing hair, saying to the lord of the earth: I will not fight! was silent. (9)

To him Krishna of the flowing hair replied, smiling as it were, O son of Bharata, as he sank there despondent between the two armies :

THE MASTER SAID :

Thou hast grieved for those who need no grief, and thou speakest words of wisdom ! The wise grieve neither for the dead nor for the living ;

For never was I not, nor thou, nor these princes of men ; nor shall we all ever cease to be, in the time to come.

As the lord of the body in the body here finds boyhood, youth and age, so is there the gaining of another body ; the wise err not concerning this.

These things of matter, that bring us cold, heat, pleasure, pain, come and go again ; they last not ; therefore endure them, O son of Bharata !

Whom these perturb not, O bull of men, equal in pain and pleasure, wise, he builds for immortality. (15)

For the unreal there is no being, nor any end of being for the real ; the truth as to these two is seen by those who behold reality.

But know That to be imperishable whereby all this is stretched forth ; and none can cause the destruction of the everlasting.

These temporal bodies are declared to belong to the eternal lord of the body, imperishable, immeasurable ; therefore fight, O son of Bharata !

He who sees him as slayer, or who thinks of him as slain, both understand not ; he slays not nor is slain.

He is never born nor dies, nor will he, having being, evermore cease to be ; unborn, eternal, immemorial, this Ancient is not slain when the body is slain. (20)

He who knows this imperishable, eternal, unborn, and passing not away, how can that man, O son of Pritha, slay any, or cause any to be slain ?

As putting off worn out garments, a man takes others new, so putting off worn-out bodies, the lord of the body enters others new.

Swords cut him not, nor may fire burn him, O son of Bharata, waters wet him not, nor dry winds parch.

He may not be cut nor burned nor wet nor withered ; he is eternal, all-present, firm, unshaken, everlasting.

He is called unmanifest, unimaginable, unchanging ; therefore, knowing him thus, deign not to grieve ! (25)

But even if thou thinkest of him as ever born, ever dying, yet deign not, therefore, to grieve for him, O mighty armed one!

For certain is the death of what is born, and certain is the birth of what dies; therefore, deign not to grieve in a matter that is inevitable.

The beginnings of things are unmanifest, their mid course is manifest, O son of Bharata; their ending is unmanifest; what cause is here for lamentation?

One sees him as marvelous, another speaks of him as marvelous, another hears of him as marvelous, yet even hearing, one knows him not.

This lord of the body dwells ever immortal in the body of each, O son of Bharata; therefore, deign not to grieve even for all beings! (30)

Or having regard to thy duty, deign not to shrink back! For nothing is better for a warrior than a righteous battle.

And such a battle has come to thee of its own accord, a very door of heaven wide opened; happy the warriors, son of Pritha, who find such a fight as this!

But if thou shalt not fight this righteous fight, then failing in duty and honor, thou wilt incur sin;

And men will tell of thy lasting dishonor, and for one who has stood in honor, ill-fame is worse than death.

The warriors in their chariots will think thou hast retreated from the battle through fear, and thou shalt come to light esteem among those who held thee high. (35)

Many unspeakable words will thy enemies speak of thee, impeaching thy manhood. What fate could be more grievous than that?

Either, slain, thou wilt gain heaven, or, conquering, thou wilt enjoy the earth; therefore, arise, O son of Kunti, determined to do battle!

Making equal good and ill fortune, gain and loss, victory and defeat; gird thyself for the fight, for thus thou shalt not fall into sin!

[This thought is declared to thee according to Sankhya; now hear it according to Yoga. Held by this thought, O son of Pritha, thou shalt free thyself from the bond of works.]

Here is no loss of advantage, nor any going back; even a little of this law saves from the great fear. (40)

The thought whose essence is determination is single, O rejoicer of the Kurus! Many-branched and endless are the thoughts of the undetermined.

[This is a flowery word which the unwise declare, who delight in the letter of the Vedas, O son of Pritha, and say there is nothing else,

[They who are full of desire and eager for heaven; this word offering rebirth and the reward of works, abounding in special rites making for feasts and lordship;

[The thought of those who are set on feasts and lordship, whose minds are carried away thereby, has not determination as its essence, nor is it set in soul-vision;

[The Vedas have the Three Powers as their object; be thou above the Three Powers, O Arjuna! Be free from duality, ever standing in the real, without desire of possessions, full of the Soul; (45)

[As much use as there is in a well, when the whole land is flooded, so much use is there in all the Vedas for a Knower of the Eternal who possesses wisdom.]

Thy right is to the work, but never to its fruits; let not the fruit of thy work be thy motive, nor take refuge in abstinence from works.

Standing in union with the Soul carry out thy work, putting away attachment, O conqueror of wealth; equal in success and failure, for equalness is called union with the Soul.

For work is far lower than union in soul-vision, O conqueror of wealth; find refuge in soul-vision, for pitiful are those whose motive is the fruit of their works.

He who is united in soul-vision offers up even here both things well done and ill done; therefore, gird thyself for union with the Soul, for this union brings success in works. (50)

For the possessors of wisdom, united in soul-vision, giving up the fruit of works, freed from the bondage of rebirth, reach the home where no sorrow dwells.

When thy soul shall pass beyond the forest of delusion, thou shalt no more regard what shall be taught or what has been taught.

When withdrawn from traditional teaching, thy soul shall stand steadfast, firm in soul-vision, then shalt thou again union with the Soul.

ARJUNA SAID:

What is the description of one firm in perception, of one firm in soul-vision, O thou of the flowing hair? He who is firm in soul, how does he speak? How does he sit? How does he go?

THE MASTER SAID :

When he offers up all desires that dwell in the heart, O son of Pritha, in soul rejoicing in the Soul, then he is said to be firm in perception. (55)

Whose heart is untroubled in sorrows, who in pleasures is unallured, from whom lust and fear and wrath have gone, that silent one is declared to be firm in soul.

He who is free from over-fondness, meeting glory and gloom alike, who exults not nor hates, his perception is set firm.

When as a tortoise withdraws its limbs on all sides, he withdraws his powers from things of sense, his perception is set firm.

Things of sense withdraw from the lord of the body who tastes them not; even the desire for them falls away from him who has seen the desireless Supreme.

Even when a wise man strives, O son of Kunti, the turbulent powers swiftly steal away his heart; (60)

Controlling them all let him remain united, intent upon Me; for of him who controls his powers, the perception is set firm.

In the man who broods on things of sense, attachment to them springs up; from attachment is born desire, from desire wrath takes birth;

From wrath comes delusion, from delusion loss of recollection, from loss of recollection comes loss of soul-vision, through loss of soul-vision he perishes.

But who among things of sense uses his powers freed from lust and hate, and controlled by the Soul, with soul well-disposed he enters into peace.

In peace there comes the ending of all sorrows, for the soul of inspiration swiftly enfolds him whose heart is full of peace. (65)

There is no soul-vision for him who is not united, nor is there any divine experience for him; without experience of the divine, there is no rest, and what happiness can there be without rest?

For when his emotion follows the powers in their action it carries his perception away, as the wind carries a boat away to sea.

Therefore, of him, O mighty armed one, whose powers are altogether withheld from things of sense, the perception is set firm.

He who has attained self-mastery wakes where is night for all beings, and where all beings wake is night for the silent seer.

As the waters enter the ocean, ever filled yet standing unmoved, whom all desires so enter, he gains peace, not he who lusts after desires.

The man who, offering up all desires, walks without allurements, without the sense of possessing, without self-reference, he enters into peace. (71)

This is the God-like resting-place, O son of Pritha, nor will he who has gained it be led away; dwelling in this at the time of the end, he wins union with the Eternal.

BOOK III.

ARJUNA SAID:

If soul-vision be deemed by thee greater than work, O arouser of men, then why dost thou engage me in a terrible deed, O thou of flowing hair?

With confused speech thou deludest my thought, as it were; then declare one thing clearly, whereby I may gain the better way.

THE MASTER SAID:

[In this world a twofold rule was declared by me of old, O sinless one: by union through wisdom for the Sankhyas; by union through works, for the followers of Yoga.]

Not by withholding from works does a man reach freedom from works, nor through renunciation alone does he win supreme success.

For none ever for an instant even remains without working works; for he is made to work works involuntarily, through the Powers born of Nature. (5)

He who, restraining the powers of action, dwells remembering in mind the objects of sense, such a one, wholly deluded, is called a false ascetic.

But he who, controlling the sense-powers by the mind, Arjuna, enters through his powers of action on union through works, he, detached, gains excellence.

Do the work that is laid on thee, for work is better than ceasing from works; nor could thy bodily life proceed, if thou didst cease from works.

Except by work done through sacrifice, this world is bound by works; therefore, do thou, son of Kunti, carry out thy work to that end, free from attachment.

[Putting forth beings united with sacrifice, the Lord of beings declared of old: By this shall ye increase and multiply; let this be your cow of plenty, granting your wishes. (10)]

Nourish the gods through this; may the gods also nourish you! Thus mutually nourishing each other, ye shall gain happiness supreme.

For the gods, nourished by sacrifice, will grant you the feasts that you wish. He who eats, not giving to them of what they give, is a thief indeed.

The righteous, who eat what is left from the sacrifice, are freed from all sins. They sinful eat sin, who prepare food for themselves alone.

From food are born beings; from the Rain lord is born food; from sacrifice is born the Rain lord; sacrifice is born of works;

Know that works are born of Brahma; Brahma is born of the Everlasting. Therefore the all-present Brahma is set firm for ever in sacrifice. (15)

He who makes not to revolve the wheel thus set revolving, sinful of life, making a pleasure-ground of the senses, he, son of Pritha, lives in vain.

But the son of man who, rejoicing in the Soul, delighting in the Soul, finds contentment, verily, in the Soul, for him no work remains to be done.

There is no gain to him through work done, nor through what is left undone in this world below; nor among all beings is there any whom he need beg for any boon.

Therefore detached carry out ever the work that is to be done; for the man who accomplishes his work detached wins the supreme.

For through works did Janaka and his like achieve supreme success. And deign thou also to work, having regard to the host of the people.

Whatever the best does, that lesser folk do also; what example he sets, that the world follows after. (21)

For Me, son of Pritha, nothing remains that should be done throughout the three worlds, nor aught to gain that I have not gained; yet I engage in works.

For if I should not engage in works unceasingly, even for a moment, —since all beings put forth their energy in obedience to mine—

These worlds would sink away, were I not to carry on works, and I should cause confusion among them, and bring destruction to these beings.

As the unwise work, attached to their work, O son of Bharata, so let the wise man work detached, working for the order of mankind.

Let him not cause a breach in the understanding of the unwise, who are attached to works, but rather let the wise man lead them in all works, engaging in them in union with the Soul. (26)

Works are being wrought on all hands by the Powers of Nature; only when the soul is deluded by egotism, does one think himself to be the doer.

But he who knows the truth, O mighty armed one, as to the separate-ness of the Powers and works, understanding that the Powers work in the Powers, is not attached.

Those who are deluded by the Powers of Nature become attached to the works of the Powers; they see not the whole, and are slow of understanding; let not him who sees the whole cause them to waver.

In Me renouncing all works, through perception of oneness with the Oversoul, without expectation or sense of possession, fight thou, thy fever gone! (30)

The sons of man who follow ever after this mind of Mine, full of faith, without cavil, they indeed are freed by their works.

But they who cavil, and follow not this mind of Mine, know them, led astray from all wisdom, as lost through lack of understanding.

The wise ever strives conformably with his nature; beings follow their nature,—what will constraint avail?

Lust and hate are lodged in the object of every sense; let him not come under their sway, for they lie in wait about his path.

Better one's own duty without excellence than the duty of another well followed out. Death in one's own duty is better; the duty of another is full of danger. (35)

ARJUNA SAID:

Then under whose yoke does man here commit sin, unwillingly even, O descendant of Vrishni, as though compelled by force?

THE MASTER SAID:

It is lust, it is wrath, born of the Power of Force; the great consumer, the great evil,—know this to be the enemy.

As flame is wrapped by smoke, as a mirror is veiled by rust, as the germ is enwrapped by the womb, so is this enveloped by that;

Wisdom is enveloped by that eternal enemy of the wise, whose form is Desire, O son of Kunti, an insatiate fire.

The sense-powers, the emotions, the understanding are its dwelling place; through them Desire deludes the lord of the body, enveloping wisdom. (40)

Therefore in the beginning restraining the sense-powers, O bull of

the Bharatas, do thou put away this evil, destroyer of wisdom and knowledge both.

They say the sense-powers are higher than objects; than the sense-powers emotion is higher; than emotion understanding is higher; but higher than understanding is He.

Thus awaking to Him who is above understanding, establishing thy soul on the Soul, slay the enemy, O mighty armed one, whose form is Desire, who is hard to overcome.

BOOK IV.

THE MASTER SAID:

This imperishable teaching of union I declared to the Solar lord. The Solar lord imparted it to Manu, and Manu told it to Ikshvaku.

Thus the Rajanya sages knew it, handed down from Master to disciple. This teaching of union has been lost in the world through long lapse of time, O consumer of the foe.

This same immemorial teaching of union I have declared to thee to-day; for thou art my beloved, my companion; and this secret doctrine is the most excellent treasure.

ARJUNA SAID:

Later was thy birth, O noble one, earlier the birth of the Solar lord. How then may I understand this, that thou hast declared it in the beginning?

THE MASTER SAID:

Many are My past births and thine also, Arjuna; I know them all, but thou knowest them not, O consumer of the foe. (5)

Though I am the Unborn, the Soul that passes not away, though I am the lord of beings, yet as lord over My nature I become manifest, through the magical power of the Soul.

For whenever there is a withering of the Law, O son of Bharata, and an uprising of lawlessness on all sides, then I manifest Myself.

For the salvation of the righteous, and the destruction of such as do evil; for the firm establishing of the Law I come to birth in age after age.

He who thus perceives My birth and work as divine, as in truth it is, leaving the body, he goes not to rebirth; he goes to Me, Arjuna.

Rid of rage and fear and wrath, become like Me, taking refuge in Me, many made pure by the fire of wisdom have entered My being. (10)

In whatever way men approach Me, in that way I love them; in all ways the sons of man follow My way, O son of Pritha.

Desiring the success of their works, they worship the deities here; for quickly in the world of men success comes, born of works.

The Four Caste Rule was formed by Me, according to the division of powers and works; know Me as its maker, I who forever am above all works.

Works smear Me not, nor am I allured by reward of works; he who thus knows Me well, such a one is not bound by works.

Thus knowing, those of old who sought liberation engaged in works. Do thou therefore that same work which was done of old by the men of old. (15)

As to what is work, and what not work, even seers have been deceived; therefore I shall declare work to thee, knowing which thou shalt go free from darkness.

One must understand works; one must understand also what is forbidden; and one must understand abstinence from works; the way of works is hard to trace.

He who sees abstinence from work in work, and work in abstinence from work, he is wise among the sons of man; he possesses union, and has accomplished the whole work.

He whose initiatives are all devoid of lust and false imaginings, the wise say that that sage has burned up works in the fire of wisdom.

Giving up attachment to the reward of works, ever content, not seeking boons, though thoroughly wrapped up in work, such a one engages not in work. (20)

Without expectations, with imagination well ruled, ceasing from all grasping, with the body only engaging in work, he incurs no sin.

Content with what comes of its own accord, beyond the opposites, without sense of ownership, equal in success and failure, though engaging in works he is not bound.

Works fall away from him, whose attachment is gone, who is set free, whose thought rests in wisdom, who works for sacrifice alone.

The Eternal is the offering, the Eternal is the sacrificial butter, the Eternal is in the fire, by the Eternal is the sacrifice made: the Eternal, verily, is to be approached by that sacrifice, by him intent on the work of the Eternal.

Some who seek union worship through sacrifice to the gods; but others offer self-sacrifice as a sacrifice in the fire of the Eternal.

Others offer up hearing and the other powers in the fire of self-control; others offer sound and other things of sense in the fire of the powers. (26)

Yet others offer all the works of the powers and the works of the life-force in the fire of control by the soul, the fire that wisdom kindles.

There are sacrificers of wealth, sacrificers through fervor, sacrificers for union, sacrificers through study and wisdom, well-ruled, firm in their vows.

So others offer the life-breath in the downward breath, or the downward breath in the life-breath, guarding the ways of the life-breath and the downward breath, devoted to breath-control.

Others restrained in food, offer the life-breath in the life-breath; all these knowers of sacrifice, through sacrifice wear away their darkness.

They who eat the ambrosial leavings of the sacrifice go to the immemorial Eternal. Not this world even belongs to him who sacrifices not, how then the other world, O best descendant of Kuru? (31)

Thus are many forms of sacrifice set forth before the Eternal. Know them all to be born of works; thus knowing, thou shalt be set free.

Better than the sacrifice of wealth is the sacrifice of wisdom, O consumer of the foe! Each and every work is consummated in wisdom.

Seek for wisdom with obeisance, questioning and service; the wise, who know the truth, will point the way of wisdom to thee;

Knowing which, thou shalt not again come to confusion, O son of Pandu; and by it thou shalt behold all beings without reserve in the Soul, and thus in Me. (35)

Even though thou art the chief sinner among all sinners, thou shalt cross to the further side of evil in the boat of all-knowledge.

As a kindled fire reduces the fuel to ashes, Arjuna, so does the fire of wisdom reduce to ashes all works.

For no purifier can be found equal to wisdom; he who is perfected in union in due time finds that within his own soul.

He who is full of faith gains wisdom, seeking after it with powers controlled; gaining wisdom, in no long time he enters the supreme peace.

But the unknowing, who has no faith, who is full of doubt, falls; neither this world, nor the world beyond, nor happiness are for him who is full of doubt. (40)

Works bind not him who offers up works through wisdom, who by wisdom has cut through all doubt, who is full of the Soul, O conqueror of wealth.

Therefore with the Soul's sword of wisdom cutting through every doubt born of unwisdom that dwells in the heart, arise and go forward to union, son of Bharata!

BOOK V.

ARJUNA SAID :

Thou praisest renunciation of works, O Krishna, and again union with the Soul; tell me with certainty which of these two is better!

THE MASTER SAID :

Renunciation and union through works both make for the supreme goal; but of these two union through works is more excellent than renunciation of works.

He should be known as ever renouncing, who hates not nor desires; for he who is without these opposites, O mighty armed one, is happily freed from bondage.

Children, not wise men, speak of Sankhya and Yoga as different; he who has perfectly mastered one finds the fruit of both.

The goal that is gained by the Sankhyas, is also reached by the followers of Yoga; who sees Sankhya and Yoga as one, he indeed sees! (5)

But renunciation, O mighty armed one, is hard to attain for him who is without union; the master of silence, who is joined in union, in no long time attains the Eternal.

Joined in union, purified in soul, self-conquered, lord of all his powers, his soul made one with the Soul of all beings, even though working, he is not stained.

He who is joined in union, who truly knows, understands that he engages not at all in work, though seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, walking, sleeping, breathing,

Conversing, putting forth, grasping, opening or closing his eyes; he understands that the powers are working with the objects of the powers.

Who works, putting all works on the Eternal, giving up attachment, is not stained by sin, as the lotus leaf by water. (10)

With body, with mind, with understanding, with pure powers the followers of union do work, free from attachment, to make themselves clean.

He who is united, giving up the fruit of works, wins perfect peace; the ununited, attached to the fruit of his works, is bound by the force of his desire.

Renouncing all works in mind, lord of himself, the lord of the body dwells content in the nine-doored abode, neither working nor the cause of work.

The Lord of the world makes neither actorship nor works, nor attachment to the fruit of works; self-existent Nature acts in these.

The Lord receives not the sin nor the good deeds of any; wisdom is concealed by unwisdom; through this the people are led astray. (15)

But in whom unwisdom is destroyed by the wisdom of the Soul, for them wisdom sunlike illumines the Supreme.

With thought fixed on That, with soul set on That, making That their rule, going forward toward That, they go the Way that has no return, by wisdom rid of all their sins.

A Brahman full of wisdom and virtue, a cow, an elephant, a dog or a feeder of dogs: in these the wise behold no difference.

Even in this world they have conquered rebirth, whose minds are set firm in Oneness; the Eternal is one and faultless, therefore they are set firm in the Eternal.

Let him not exult when he meets happiness, let him not grieve when he meets sorrow; firm in soul-vision, undeluded, knowing the Eternal, he stands firm in the Eternal. (20)

When with soul detached from contact of outer things, he finds all happiness in the Soul, joined in union with the Eternal, he reaches everlasting joy.

For delights born of contact with outer things are wombs of pain; they have their beginning and their ending, son of Kunti; in them the wise finds no delight.

He who even here, before the liberation from the body, is able to withstand the impetuous rush of desire and wrath, he is united, he is the happy man.

Who finds his joy within, his paradise within, his light within, that master of union, become the Eternal, wins Nirvana, union with the Eternal.

The seers win Nirvana, union with the Eternal, whose sins are

worn away, who have cut the knot of separateness, who are self-mastered, who delight in the weal of all beings. (25)

Nirvana, union with the Eternal, has come nigh to those who are rid of desire and wrath, who have gained control, who control their thoughts, who have beheld the Soul.

Putting away external contacts, fixing the vision between the brows, making the inbreathing and outbreathing in the nostrils equal,

Controlling the powers and mind and thought, master of silence, bent on liberation, free from longing, fear and wrath, such a one is ever free.

Knowing Me to be the enjoyer of sacrifice and fervor, mighty Lord of all the world, lover of all beings, he reaches peace.

BOOK VI.

THE MASTER SAID:

Who does the work that is to be done without seeking reward, he has renounced, he follows union, not he who ceases from sacrifice and rites.

Son of Pandu, know that what they call renunciation is also union, for none can reach union who has not renounced the heart's desires.

For the master of silence who is seeking to rise to union, work is said to be the means; for him, when he has risen to union, peace is declared to be the means.

For when he is attached neither to the objects of the powers nor to works, renouncing all the desires of the heart, then he is called one who has risen to union.

Let him raise himself toward the Self, let him not debase himself; for self is the friend of self, and self is the enemy of self. (5)

Self is the friend of self for him in whom the self is conquered by the Self; but to him who is far from the Self, his own self is hostile, like an enemy.

The soul of him, who is self-conquered and full of peace, is fixed on the Supreme, in cold and heat, in pleasure and pain, in honor and dishonor.

That seeker of union is declared a possessor of union, whose soul delights in wisdom and knowledge, who has gained the mountain-top, who has controlled his powers, for whom a clod, a stone, and gold are alike.

Who regards with equal view beloved, friend, foe, indifferent, undecided, hateful, and kindred, as also the righteous and sinners, he stands supreme.

Let the follower of union, dwelling apart, ever seek union with the Self, standing alone, controlling mind and heart, free from expectation, uncovetous. (10)

[In a pure place finding a firm seat for himself, neither too high nor too low, spread with a cloth, a fawn-skin and sacred grass;

Making his mind one-pointed, controlling thought and powers and acts, seated there let him seek to join himself in union, for self-purification;

Holding body, head and neck upright, firm and unmoving, fixing his view on the tip of the nose, nor looking this way and that.]

With soul at peace, with fear gone, standing firm in the vow of service of the Eternal, controlling the mind, with heart set on Me, let him dwell in union, intent on Me.

The seeker of union ever holding his soul thus in union, with emotion well controlled, enters into the supreme peace of Nirvana, dwelling in Me. (15)

Union is not for him who eats too much, nor for him who eats not at all; it is not his who is too dreamy, nor of him who is too full of waking life, Arjuna.

For him who is united when eating and moving, who is united when busy with work, who is united asleep and awake, union destroys all pain.

When the imagination, well ruled, comes to rest in the Soul, unalured by all desires, then he is called a possessor of union.

As a lamp standing in a windless place flickers not, this is remembered as the similitude of the seeker of union, who, with imagination controlled, joins himself in union with the Soul.

Where thought enters the silence, stilled by the practise of union, there, verily, through the soul beholding the Soul, he finds joy in the Soul; (20)

Where he knows that infinite joy, transcending the powers, to be grasped by soul-vision, and stands firm, unshakable indeed;

Gaining which, he knows that nought remains to gain; standing in which he is not shaken even by heavy grief;

Let him know that escape from the yoke of sorrow, which is called union; the union that is to be sought determinedly, with indomitable heart.

Giving up unreservedly all longings born of the desires of the heart, through the mind completely controlling the assembly of the powers,

Let him gradually enter the silence, with firmly held soul-vision, making the mind rest in the soul, allowing no imaginings. (25)

Whithersoever the mind wanders, wavering and unstable, drawing it ever back thence, let him bring it under the sway of the Soul.

For the most excellent joy draws near to that seeker for union, whose mind has found peace, whose forces are at peace, who has become the Eternal, who is free from darkness.

The seeker for union, thus ever joining himself in union, his darkness gone, happily attains the infinite joy of union with the Eternal.

He sees his soul as one with all beings, and all beings as one with his soul; his soul joined in union, beholding Oneness everywhere.

Who sees Me everywhere, and sees all in Me, him I lose not, nor will he lose Me. (30)

Who, resting in Oneness, loves Me dwelling in all beings, wheresoever he may turn, this follower of union dwells in Me.

Who through loving all as himself beholds Oneness everywhere, Arjuna, whether it be in joy or sorrow, that follower of union is deemed supreme.

ARJUNA SAID:

This union through Oneness which is taught by Thee, Slayer of Madhu,—I perceive not its firm foundation, owing to the wavering of the mind;

For the mind wavers, Krishna, turbulent, impetuous, forceful; and I think it is as hard to hold as the wind!

THE MASTER SAID:

Without doubt, mighty armed one, the wavering mind is hard to hold; but through assiduous practise, O son of Kunti, and through detachment it may be held firm. (35)

For him whose mind is uncontrolled, union is hard to obtain, this is my opinion; but for him whose mind has been brought under his sway, who is controlled, it can be won by the right means.

ARJUNA SAID:

If one be full of faith, yet uncontrolled, because his mind wanders from union, falling short of the perfect attainment of union, what path does he follow, Krishna?

Does he perish like a riven cloud, missing his way in both worlds, unsteadfast, mighty armed one, deluded from the path of the Eternal?

Deign to solve this doubt of mine completely, Krishna; for other than thee none may solve this doubt.

THE MASTER SAID:

Son of Pritha, neither in this world nor the other is there any

loss for him; nor does any doer of fair deeds, friend, enter into the evil way. (40)

Entering the worlds won by holy deeds, and dwelling for long ages there, he who fell short of union is reborn in the house of pure and holy folk;

Or indeed he may be born in a family of seekers for union, full of wisdom, for such a birth in this world is harder to obtain.

There he possesses the same soul-vision that he won in the former body, and thenceforth strives again for the perfect attainment, O rejoicer of the Kurus.

Even without any wish of his own, he is taken in hand by his former effort. He who wishes to learn of union, passes beyond mere word knowledge of the Eternal.

But the seeker of union who strenuously strives, purified of sin, after many births attaining, thereafter goes the higher way. (45)

The follower of union is deemed higher than men of penance, higher than men of learning; the follower of union is higher than men of works; be thou therefore a follower of union, Arjuna!

But among all followers of union, he who, full of faith, loves Me, the soul within him set on Me, him I deem the best possessor of union.

BOOK VII.

THE MASTER SAID:

With heart attached to Me, son of Pritha, taking refuge in Me, joining himself in union, hear how thou mayest know Me perfectly, free from doubt.

This wisdom and knowledge shall I declare to thee, without reserve; knowing this, nought remains to be known in the world.

Among thousands of men, one strives for perfection; of those who strive and attain, one knows Me truly.

Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, thought, self-consciousness: thus is My nature divided eightfold.

This is My lower nature; but know thou also My higher nature, as manifested Life, whereby this whole world is upheld. (5)

Know that all beings are born from this; for I am the forthcoming and withdrawal of the whole world.

But higher than I nothing is, Arjuna; on Me all this is woven, as a string of pearls on a thread.

I am taste in the waters, O son of Kunti, I am light in moon and sun; in all Vedas I am the Om, I am sound in the ether and manhood in men.

I am the sweet scent in the earth, I am the glow in fire; life am I in all beings, and fervor in men of fervor.

Know Me as the everlasting seed of all beings, the thought of the thinking, the radiance of the radiant. (10)

I am the might of the mighty, rid of lust and wrath; I am love unopposed to law among beings, O bull of Bharatas.

And whatever forms there are of Goodness, Force and Darkness, know they also are from Me; nor am I in them, but they in Me.

Entranced by the forms resting on these Three Powers, this whole world recognizes not Me, who am above them, everlasting.

For wondrous is this Glamor of mine, formed of the Three Powers,

very hard to pass beyond; but they who come to Me, pass indeed beyond this Glamor.

But workers of evil, deluded, basest of men, come not to Me; their wisdom rapt away by Glamor, they enter some demoniac being. (15)

Four kinds of men rightly worship Me, Arjuna; the afflicted, the seeker for knowledge, he who desires a boon, and the wise man, O bull of the Bharatas.

Among these the wise man, ever joined in union, of single heart, stands first; for I am greatly beloved of the wise, and he is beloved of Me.

All these are noble, but the wise is esteemed as My own Self; for united in soul, he is set on Me, the most excellent way.

At the end of many births, the possessor of wisdom comes to Me, perceiving that the Lord of Wealth is the All; such a one of mighty soul is hard to find.

They whose wisdom is stolen away by diverse desires go to other deities, following one or another service, each impelled by his own nature. (20)

Whatever form he seeks to honor, worshipping with faith, that firm faith of his I establish;

Held firm by faith, he seeks the service of that form; and from it receives his dear desires, granted verily by Me.

But the reward of these of little wisdom comes to an end; who worship the gods go to the gods; My worshippers come to Me.

The thoughtless think that I, the unmanifest, possess a manifested form, not knowing My Higher Being, excellent and everlasting.

Nor am I visible to all, wrapt in My magical Glamor; this world deluded recognizes Me not, unborn, everlasting. (25)

I know all beings, Arjuna, the past, the present, those that are to come; but Me none knows.

By the delusion of the opposites, arising in desire and hate, O son of Bharata, all beings in the world are deluded, consumer of the foe.

But they whose darkness is gone, who are workers of righteousness, free from the delusion of the opposites, worship Me, firm in their vows.

They who strive for freedom from age and death, taking refuge in Me, know the Eternal, the All, the highest self, the perfect Work.

They who know Me as the highest Being, the highest Divinity, the highest Sacrifice, even in death perceive Me, their hearts united to Me.

BOOK VIII.

ARJUNA SAID:

What is the Eternal? What is the highest Self? What is the Work, O best of men? What is called the highest Being, and what is declared to be the highest Divinity?

What and in what manner is the highest Sacrifice, here, in the body, O Slayer of Madhu? And how art thou to be known at the time of going forth in death, by those who are self-ruled?

THE MASTER SAID:

Unchanging is the supreme Eternal. Self-conscious Life is called the highest Self. The emanating Power which causes the form and forthcoming of all beings, is called Karma, the great Work.

The highest Being is existence subject to change. Individual Spirit is the highest Divinity. The highest Sacrifice am I, here in the body, O best of embodied creatures!

And he who goes forth, putting off the body, and at the time of the end remembering Me, such a one goes to My Being; of this there is no doubt. (5)

Whatever Being one remembers, when putting off the body at death, to that verily he goes, O Son of Kunti, ever formed in the likeness of that Being.

Therefore at every instant remember Me, and fight on; with heart and soul-vision fixed on Me, thou shalt assuredly come to Me.

Such a one with thought assiduously held in union with Me, and wandering in no other way, goes to the supreme Spirit, the Divine, ever thinking thereon, O son of Pritha.

He who holds in his heart that Seer, the Ancient, the Giver of commands, who is smaller than small; who is the Disposer of the All, of form unthinkable, in color like the sun, beyond the darkness;

At the time of the end united in love, with heart unwavering, and

with the power of union, gathering the life-power between the brows, he enters straightway into the supreme Spirit, the Divine. (10)

That which knowers of the Vedas call the Unchanging, to which saints, freed from passion, enter in, that which they seek, who vow service to the Eternal, that resting place shall I briefly tell to thee.

Firmly holding all the doors of the senses, and holding emotion within the heart, drawing the life-breath together in the brow, steadfastly set on the practice of union ;

Sounding the syllable Om, for the Eternal, with heart set upon Me, who goes forth thus, putting off the body, he enters on the highest Way.

He who ever rests his heart on Me, with no other thought, for him I am easy to find, for the seeker of union, thus holding ever to union.

Entering into Me, the Mighty-souled return not to rebirth, to this unenduring house of pain ; they have reached supreme attainment. (15)

All beings, Creator and worlds alike, return again and again, O Arjuna ; but, son of Kunti, entering into Me, there is no more rebirth.

They who know the Day of the Creator as completed in a thousand ages, and the Night of the Creator as ending in a thousand ages, they are knowers of day and night.

All manifest things spring forth from the Unmanifest, at the coming of the Day ; and at the coming of the Night, they melt away into the Unmanifest again.

The whole host of beings, coming into being again and again, melts away at the coming of the Night, and comes forth inevitably at the coming of the Day, O son of Pritha.

But beyond this manifest Being, there is another Being, unmanifest, everlasting, which does not pass away, even when all beings perish. (20)

That Unmanifest is called the Everlasting, and this they call the Supreme Way, gaining which they return not again ; this is My highest home.

This supreme Spirit, O son of Pritha, is to be found by undivided love ; in This all beings dwell, by This was the universe stretched forth.

But at what time going forth, seekers of union return not, or return, that time I shall declare to thee, O bull of the Bharatas.

They who go forth at death in the flame, the light, the day, the moonlit weeks, the summer, they, knowers of the Eternal, enter the Eternal.

But the seeker of union who goes forth in the smoke, the night, the moonless weeks, the winter, he, entering into the lunar light, returns again. (25)

These are deemed the world's immemorial ways of light and darkness; by the one he goes to return no more, by the other he returns again.

Knowing these two paths, O son of Pritha, the seeker of union goes not astray. Therefore at all times be thou united in union, O Arjuna.

The holy reward that is pointed out in the Vedas, sacrifices, penances and gifts, that perfect reward the seeker of union, who knows all this, passes beyond, entering into the supreme home, the source of all.

BOOK IX.

THE MASTER SAID:

This most secret wisdom I will declare to thee, since thou dost not cavil, and with it knowledge, knowing which thou shalt be freed from darkness.

This is the royal science, the royal secret, this is the most excellent purifier; it is to be understood by intuition, it is righteous, it is happiness to follow, it passes not away.

Men without faith in this law, O consumer of the foe, failing to reach Me, turn back again along the way of the circle of death.

By Me, whose form is unmanifest, was this whole world stretched forth; all beings are set in Me, but I am not contained in them.

Yet do not beings dwell in Me: behold My lordly power! I am the supporter of all beings, though I dwell not in beings; My Soul causes beings to be. (5)

As the mighty wind, that goes everywhere, rests ever in space, so do all beings dwell in Me; thus understand!

All beings, O son of Kunti, go to My nature at the end of the age; and I put them all forth again at the beginning of the world-period.

Establishing My own nature, again and again I put forth this host of beings inevitably, by the power of nature.

Nor do all these works bind Me down, O winner of wealth; seated in lordship above them, unattached to all these works.

Under My supervision Nature engenders beings moving and motionless; through this motive power, O son of Kunti, the world circles on its way. (10)

The deluded contemn Me, thus entered into a human form, not knowing My supreme nature, as mighty Lord of beings.

Vain their hopes, vain their works, vain their wisdom, of little knowledge; they have entered into savage and demoniac natures, full of delusions.

But the Mighty-souled, O son of Pritha, who draw near My divine nature, love Me with undivided heart, knowing Me the source of beings, that passes not away.

Ever doing honor to Me, striving, firm in their vows, they bow down to Me in love, drawing near to Me in perpetual union.

And others, offering the sacrifice of wisdom, draw near to Me, as in unity or diversity, or manifold, appearing in all things. (15)

I am the offering, I am the sacrifice, I am the oblation, I am the libation; I am the chant, I am the holy oil, I am the fire, I am what is offered.

I am the father of this world, the mother, the guardian, the father's father; I am the end of knowledge, the purifier, the sacred syllable, the hymn, the chant, the sacred sentence.

I am the way, the supporter, the lord, the witness, the home, the refuge, the beloved; the forthcoming and withdrawing, the place, the treasure, the everlasting seed.

I give warmth, I withhold the rain and send it forth; I am immortality and death, existent and non-existent, O Arjuna.

The men of the Three Vedas, Soma-drinkers, pure from sin, offering sacrifices, seek from Me the way of heaven; they, gaining Lord Indra's paradise, eat divine feasts of the gods in heaven. (20)

They, having enjoyed that wide heavenly world, on the waning of their merit enter the mortal world. Thus putting their trust in the threefold Vedic law, and full of desires, they gain as reward their going and return.

But those who think on Me with undivided heart, drawing near to Me in worship, for them ever joined to Me in union, I bring a sure reward.

Even they who worship other deities with love, filled with faith, they also, O son of Kunti, even though irregularly, worship Me;

For I am the enjoyer and lord of all sacrifices; yet they know Me not truly, and so they fall.

Those who vow to the gods, go to the gods; those who vow to the Fathers, go to the Fathers; those who sacrifice to the departed, go to the departed, and those who sacrifice to Me, go to Me. (25)

He who with love gives Me a leaf, a flower, a fruit, or water, this gift of love I accept from him who is self-conquered.

Whatever thou doest, whatever thou eatest, whatever thou offerest, whatever thou givest, whatever penance thou doest, O son of Kunti, do it as an offering to Me.

Thus shalt thou be set free from the bonds of works, fruits of deeds fair or foul; thy soul united through renunciation and union, liberated, thou shalt come to Me.

I am equal toward all beings; nor is any hated or favored of Me; but they who love Me with dear love, they are in Me and I in them.

Should even a chief of sinners love Me with undivided love, he is to be held a saint, for he has decided wisely. (30)

Soon he becomes altogether righteous, entering ever into peace; and know certainly, O son of Kunti, my beloved will not perish.

Whosoever they be, O son of Pritha, who take refuge in Me, even though they be born of sin, women or merchants or serfs, they also go on the highest way.

How much more holy priests and royal sages, full of love! Therefore, as thou dwellest in this unlasting, sorrowing world, do thou love Me.

Set thy heart on Me, thy love on Me, sacrifice to Me, bow down to Me, thus joining thyself to Me in union, and bent on Me, thou shalt come to Me.

BOOK X.

THE MASTER SAID:

Further, verily, O mighty-armed one, hear thou My supreme word, which I shall declare to thee because thou lovest it, desiring what is dear to thee.

The hosts of the gods know not My birth, nor the mighty Seers; for I am the source of all the gods, and all the mighty Seers.

Who knows Me unborn, beginningless, mighty Lord of the world, he undeluded among mortals, is freed from all sin.

Soul-vision, wisdom, victory over delusion, patience, truth, control and peace, happiness, sorrow, birth and death, fear and valor;

Gentleness, equity, joy, fervor, charity, honor, dishonor, such are the natures of beings, proceeding from Me in their varied forms. (5)

The seven mighty Seers, and the four Lords of mankind are mind-born from My being, of whom these worlds are the offspring.

Who rightly knows this My splendor and power, he is united in unwavering union; this is altogether sure.

I am the source of all, from Me the universe comes forth; the Awakened, thinking thus, love Me, following after love.

Their hearts set on Me, their lives given to Me, handing this wisdom down, and imparting the knowledge of Me, they joy and rejoice forever.

To them, ever joined in union, and full of love, I give soul-vision, whereby they may enter into Me. (10)

Bending down to them, yet retaining My own nature, I drive away their darkness born of unwisdom, with the flaming lamp of wisdom.

ARJUNA SAID:

The supreme Eternal, the supreme home, the supreme purifier art Thou, the everlasting Spirit, the divine; source of the gods, the unborn Lord;

Thus have all the Seers declared Thee, and the divine Seer Narada also; and Asita, Devala and Vyasa, and Thou also sayest so to me.

All this I hold to be true which Thou speakest, O long-haired one; for neither the gods nor the spirits of darkness know Thy forthcoming, Lord!

Thou Thyself, through Thyself, knowest Thyself, most excellent Spirit, Creator of beings, Lord of beings, God of gods, Ruler of the world! (15)

Thou alone art worthy to declare Thy forms, for divine are the manifold forms of Thyself, whereby permeating these worlds, Thou dwellest in them.

How may I know Thee, O Lord of union, ever meditating on Thee? and in what forms art Thou to be thought of, Lord, by me?

Declare again in order Thy power and glory, O arouser of the people! for I can never be sated with hearing this immortal tale.

THE MASTER SAID:

Verily I shall declare to thee the divine forms whereby I manifest Myself, naming the chiefest, O best of the children of Kuru, for My forms are endless.

I am the Self, O thou of crested locks, dwelling inwardly in all beings; Verily I am the beginning, and the middle, and the end also of beings. (20)

Of the sons of the Mother, I am Vishnu; among lights, I am the rayed sun; of the storm lords I am Marichi; in the mansions of the night, I am the moon.

Of the Vedas, I am the Veda of chants; among the gods, I am Indra; of perceiving powers, I am the heart; I am the consciousness of beings.

Among devourers, I am Shiva; among gnomes and sprites, I am the Lord of treasures; among fire-powers, I am the Fire-lord; among peaks, I am mount Meru.

Among priests, O son of Pritha, know Me to be their chief, Vrihaspati; among leaders of hosts, I am the War-god; among waters, I am the ocean.

Among mighty Seers, I am Bhrigu; among words, I am the sacred syllable; among sacrifices, I am unuttered prayer; among hills, I am the Himalayas. (25)

Among trees, I am the tree of life; and Narada among divine Seers:

among scraphs, I am he of the painted car ; and Kapila the silent, among those who have attained.

Among horses, know Me as the divine steed, born of ambrosia ; among elephants, I am Indra's elephant ; among men, I am the king.

Among weapons, I am the thunderbolt ; among cattle, I am the cow of desires ; I am the love-god, the engenderer ; among serpents, I am the serpent-king.

Among snakes, I am the snake of eternity ; among the water-born, I am the ocean-lord ; among the fathers, I am Aryaman ; and the Lord of the dead, among constrainers.

I am Prahlada among demons ; I am time, among measurers ; among beasts, I am the king of beasts ; and Garuda among winged creatures. (30)

Among purifiers, I am the wind ; I am Rama among warriors ; among fish, I am the sacred crocodile ; among rivers, I am the Ganges.

Of all that comes forth, I am the beginning and middle and end, O Arjuna ; among sciences, I am the science of the divine soul ; I am the word of those that speak.

Among letters, I am A ; I am the dual among compounds ; I am unwaning Time ; I am the Ruler, appearing through all things.

I am all-consuming Death ; I am the birth of things that shall be ; I am honor, grace, voice, among things feminine ; and memory and wisdom, firmness, patience.

Among chants, I am the great Chant ; among hymns, I am the Gayatri ; among months, I am the month of the deer-head ; I am flower-bringing spring among the seasons. (35)

I am the dice among uncertain things ; the fire of the fiery ; I am victory and decision ; I am the goodness of the good.

Among the children of Vrishni, I am Vasudeva ; among the sons of Pandu, I am Arjuna, conqueror of wealth ; among silent seers, I am Vyasa ; among poets, I am Ushanas the poet.

I am the scepter of the dominant ; I am the rule of those seeking victory ; I am the silence of things secret ; I am the wisdom of the wise.

And whatever is the seed among all beings, that am I, O Arjuna ; nothing that is could be without Me, among things moving or unmoving.

Nor is there any end of My divine forms, O consumer of the foe ; this I have told thee for thy instruction, as an enumeration of My manifold forms. (40)

Whatever being is glorious, gracious or powerful, thou shalt recognize that as sprung from a fragment of My fire.

But what need hast Thou of this manifold wisdom, O Arjuna ? With one part of My being I stand establishing this whole world.

BOOK XI.

ARJUNA SAID:

The word which Thou hast spoken through love of me, the supreme mystery named the Oversoul—through it my delusion is gone.

For the birth and the passing of beings have been heard by me at length from Thee, whose eyes are lotus petals; I have heard also of the Great Spirit, which passes not away.

So I would see that Self as it has been spoken by Thee, Mighty Lord; that divine form of Thine, O best of men!

If Thou thinkest it can be seen by me, Lord, Master of union, then reveal to me the Self everlasting!

THE MASTER SAID:

Son of Pritha, behold my forms hundredfold and thousandfold; manifold, divine, of many colors and forms. (5)

Behold the sons of the Mother, the Breaths, the Thunderers, the twin Healers, the Storm-powers! Behold, O son of Bharata, many wonders unseen before!

Behold the whole world gathered together here, things moving and unmoving, within My body; and whatsoever else thou wouldst see, O thou of crested locks!

But Me thou canst not behold with this vision of thine. I give thee divine vision! Behold my lordly power!

SANJAYA SAID:

Thereupon, O king, having spoken thus, Hari the mighty Lord of power revealed to the son of Pritha the supreme lordly form.

Many-faced, many-eyed, of many wonderful aspects, with many divine adornments, with many upraised divine weapons, (10)

With divine garlands and vestures, anointed with divine perfumes, altogether marvelous in nature, godlike, endless, facing everywhere.

Such as would be the radiance of a thousand suns bursting forth suddenly in the sky, such was the radiance of that Mighty Spirit.

There the son of Pandu beheld the whole world with all its differences gathered together in the body of that God of gods.

Then invaded with dismay, his flesh creeping, the conquerer of wealth bowing his head before the divinity, and with palms joined, spoke thus:

ARJUNA SAID:

I behold the gods in Thy body, O divine One! and all the hosts of diverse beings; Brahma the Creator, seated on the lotus throne, and all the Seers and Serpents of wisdom. (15)

With many an arm and maw and face and eye, I behold Thee altogether endless-formed; neither end nor middle nor yet beginning of Thee do I see, O all-formed Lord of all!

With diadem, mace and disk, a mountain of light, through Thy whole being luminous I behold Thee, difficult to view, perfectly radiant like blazing fire or the sun, immeasurable.

Thou art to be known as the supreme Everlasting; Thou art the supreme treasure of the universe; Thou art the eternal guardian of the immemorial law, I esteem Thee to be the everlasting Spirit.

Without beginning, middle or end, of endless valor, mighty-armed, Whose eyes are sun and moon; I behold Thee of countenance like flaming fire, illuminating all the universe by Thy light.

For all the expanse between heaven and earth is filled by Thee, and all the regions of space; beholding this wonderful and terrible form of Thine, the three worlds tremble, O Mighty Spirit! (20)

For the hosts of the powers draw near to Thee, praising Thee, fearful, with joined palms; and the hosts of the Mighty Seers and Masters adore Thee with songs of praise, crying: Hail! before Thee.

The Thunderers, the sons of the Mother, the Breaths, the Light-powers, the twin Healers, the Storm-powers, those who drink up the offering; seraphs, earth-sprites, the hosts of gods and Masters, all view Thee with awe.

Beholding Thy mighty form, many-faced many-eyed, O mighty-armed one, with many maws, many terrible teeth, the worlds tremble, and I also.

For seeing Thee, reaching to the clouds, luminous, many-colored, wide-mouthed, with wide luminous eyes, trembling in heart, I find nor firmness nor peace, O Vishnu!

And beholding Thy mouths with terrible teeth, like unto Time's

consuming fires, I know not where I am, nor do I find any place of refuge. Be gracious to me, Lord of gods, upholder of the world! (25)

And the sons of Dhritarashtra here, all of them, with the hosts of the princes of the earth, Bhishma, Drona, Karna yonder, son of the charioteer, and our leading warriors, too,

Hurrying enter Thy mouths, fearful, with terrible teeth; some of them are seen fixed between Thy teeth, their heads crushed.

As many rivers with impetuous waters run forward toward the ocean, so these heroes of the world of men enter Thy flaming mouth.

As moths enter a kindled flame, swiftly to their own destruction, so, verily, to their destruction the people swiftly enter thy mouths.

Thou consumest the people with licking tongues, all together in Thy blazing mouths; Thy terrible rays glow, O Vishnu, filling all the world with their radiance. (30)

Declare to me who Thou art, terrible formed! Honor to Thee, best of gods! Be gracious! I would know Thee, Primal One; for Thy power I comprehend not!

THE MASTER SAID:

I am Time, grown ripe for the destroying of the worlds, here ready to consume the people. Even without thee, they shall all cease to be, the warriors who stand there in the opposing armies.

Therefore arise, win glory, conquering thy foes, enjoy thy splendid kingdom! For these are all slain by Me already. Be thou but the instrument, thou whose both hands have equal skill!

Slay thou Drona and Bhishma, and Jayadratha and Karna, and likewise other heroes of battle, slain by Me already! Fear not! Fight, for thou shalt conquer thy rivals in battle!

SANJAYA SAID:

Arjuna of the diadem, hearing this word of Him of the flowing hair, with joined palms, trembling, bowing low, spoke again to Krishna, stammering, bending fearfully before Him. (35)

ARJUNA SAID:

Rightly, O Thou of flowing hair, the world joys and rejoices in Thy praises! Demons fearing flee to the corners of space; and all the hosts of Masters bow down before Thee.

And how should they not bow before Thee, O Mighty Spirit,

Who art more potent than the Creator, Who makest the beginning of things! O unending Lord of gods, upholder of the world, Thou art the Everlasting, the existent and non-existent, and what is beyond.

Thou art First of the gods, the Spirit, the Ancient, Thou art the supreme treasure of the universe! Thou art knower and knowable, and the supreme home; by Thee, of endless form, was all this stretched forth!

Thou art the Wind-god, the Constraining Death, the Fire-lord, the Lord of the azure sphere, the Moon, the Lord of beings, the great Progenitor! Obeisance, obeisance to Thee thousandfold! Again, once more, obeisance, obeisance to Thee!

Obeisance from before and from behind! Obeisance to Thee on all sides, for Thou art All! Thou art of endless valor, of measureless might! Thou possessest all, for Thou art All! (40)

If thinking Thee my comrade, I addressed Thee brusquely: Ho Krishna! Ho son of Yadu! Ho comrade! not knowing this greatness of Thine, or carelessly, or through affection,

Or whatever I have done to make a jest of Thee, unseemly, in journeying, resting, or seated, or at the banquet, whether alone, O unfallen one! or in presence of these, for all this I ask forgiveness from Thee, immeasurable one!

Thou art the Father of the world, of things moving and unmoving; Thou art worthy of honor, the reverend Teacher of the world! None equal Thee; how could any be greater?—even in the three worlds there is none like Thee in might!

Therefore bowing down, prostrating my body before Thee, I seek Thy grace, O worthy Lord! As the father his son, the comrade his comrade, the beloved his beloved, so deign Thou, Lord, to pardon me!

I exult, beholding what was never seen before, and my heart trembles with fear; show me, Lord, the former form; Lord of gods, be gracious, upholder of worlds! (45)

I would see Thee once more with diadem, mace and disk in thy hands as before! Take again Thy four-limbed shape, Thou of a thousand arms, of form universal!

THE MASTER SAID:

Through My favor toward thee, Arjuna, was this supreme form shown thee by My divine power, radiant, universal, endless, primal, seen by none before thee.

Not by Vedas, sacrifices, study, not by gifts or rites or harsh penances is the vision of Me to be gained in the world of men by any but thee, foremost hero of the children of Kuru!

Let not fear nor confusion overcome thee, beholding My form so terrible! Behold my former shape once more, thy fear gone, thy heart at rest!

SANJAYA SAID:

Vasudeva thus addressing Arjuna, showed him once more His own form; the Mighty Spirit consoled him fearful, taking once more a friendly shape. (50)

ARJUNA SAID:

Seeing this gracious human form of Thine, O arouser of men! I am now myself again, of quiet heart, returned to my own nature.

THE MASTER SAID:

This form of Mine which thou hast seen is hard indeed to see! Even the gods ever desire a sight of this form!

Nor can I be seen thus through Vedas, penances, gifts, sacrifices, in the form which thou hast seen.

But I can be known thus through single-hearted love, Arjuna, and seen as I truly am, and entered, O consumer of the foe!

He who works for Me, intent on Me, loving Me, free from attachment, without enmity toward all beings, he comes to Me, O son of Pandu! (55)

BOOK XII.

ARJUNA SAID :

They who thus ever united and full of love draw near to Thee, and they who worship the unmanifest Eternal,—which of these are the best knowers of union?

THE MASTER SAID :

They who, resting their hearts in Me, ever united, draw near to Me, full of supreme faith, these I hold to be most perfect in union.

But they who worship the Eternal, undefined, unmanifest, omnipresent, unthinkable, the basis of things, immovable and firm,

Restraining the bodily powers, everywhere equal-minded, they come to Me, verily, who thus rejoice in the weal of all beings.

But the toil of those whose minds are set on the Unmanifest is greater, for the way of the Unmanifest is hard for mortals to attain. (5)

But they who in Me renouncing all works, are bent on Me, draw near to Me, meditating with single-hearted union,

I am become their Savior from the ocean of death and rebirth after no long time, O son of Pritha, because they have set their hearts on Me.

Therefore set thy heart on Me, enter into Me, with thy soul! Thou shalt verily dwell in Me in the world above! Of this, there is no doubt.

But if thou art not able to concentrate thy imagination steadily on Me, then seek to reach Me by union through assiduous practice, O conqueror of wealth!

And if thou art incapable of assiduous practice, then dedicate all thy works to Me; and doing all works for My sake thou shalt reach mystic power. (10)

But if thou art unable even to do this, taking refuge in union with Me, then self-controlled, make the renunciation of the fruit of all works.

For wisdom is better than assiduous practice, but soul-vision is better than wisdom. From soul-vision comes renunciation of the fruit of works. From renunciation, peace swiftly comes.

Putting away hate for any being, friendly, pitiful, without desire of possessions, without vanity, equal in weal and woe, patient,

Content, ever following union, self-ruled, firmly determined, with heart and soul centered in Me, who thus loves Me is beloved of Me.

He whom the world fears not, who fears not the world, free from exultation, anguish, fear, disquiet, such a one is beloved of Me. (15)

Unconcerned, pure, direct, impartial, unperturbed, renouncing all personal initiatives, who thus loves Me is beloved of Me.

Who exults not nor hates nor grieves nor longs, renouncing fortune and misfortune, who is thus full of love is beloved of Me.

Equal to foe and friend, equal in honor and dishonor, equal in cold and heat, weal and woe, from attachment altogether free,

Balanced in blame or praise, full of silence, content with whatever may befall, seeking no home here, steadfast-minded, full of love, this man is beloved of Me.

And they who draw near to the righteous Immortal thus declared, full of faith, resting in Me, full of love, they are beyond all beloved of Me. (20)

BOOK XIII.

THE MASTER SAID:

This bodily being, O son of Kunti, is named the field; and who beholds it, him the wise call the knower of the field.

And know Me to be the knower of the field, in all fields, O son of Bharata; the knowledge of the field and of the knower of the field, I esteem to be knowledge indeed.

What the field is, of what nature, what are its changes, and whence it is; and what the knower is, and what his power is, that briefly learn from Me.

[By the Seers this has been celebrated in many varied hymns; and by the verses of the Brahma-Sutras, full of firm wisdom, it has been set forth.]

The elements, self-reference, understanding, the Unmanifest; the ten powers that perceive and act, mind, and the five fields of perception, Desire, hate, pleasure, pain, bodily unity, intellect, will; this is the field, briefly set forth, with its changes. (6)

Humility, sincerity, harmlessness, patience, uprightness, reverence for the Teacher, purity, steadfastness, self-control,

Freedom from sensuous longings, selflessness, perception of the defects of birth and death and age and sickness and pain,

Detachment, freedom from absorption in sons and wife and household, perpetual balance of mind, whether the wished or the unwished befall,

Undivided and faithful love of Me, a dwelling in the solitary place, shunning the multitude, (10)

Steadfast perception of the Oversoul, an understanding of the goal of true wisdom,—this is declared to be wisdom, and whatever is other than this is unwisdom.

What is to be known I shall declare to thee, knowing which thou

shalt gain immortality: the beginningless Supreme Eternal, which is neither being nor non-being,

With hands and feet everywhere, with eyes and head and face everywhere, possessed of hearing everywhere in the world, That stands, enveloping all things,

Illuminated by the power that dwells in all the senses, yet free from all sense-powers, detached, all-supporting, not divided into powers, yet enjoying all powers,

Without and within all beings, motionless, yet moving, not to be perceived is That, because of its subtlety, That stands afar, yet close at hand, (15)

Undivided among beings, though standing as if divided, and as the supporter of beings is That to be known, whither they go, and whence they come,

Light of lights also is That called, beyond the darkness, It is wisdom, It is the aim of wisdom, to be gained by wisdom, in the heart of each It is set firm.

Thus the field and wisdom and what is to be known are briefly set forth; My beloved, understanding this, enters into My being.

Know that both Nature and Spirit are beginningless; and know that changes and powers are Nature-born.

Nature is declared to be the source of cause, causing and effect; Spirit is declared to be the cause, in the tasting of pleasures and pains. (20)

For Spirit, resting in Nature, tastes of the Nature-born powers; attachment to these powers is the cause of the Spirit's births, from good or evil wombs.

The Supreme Spirit, here in the body, is called the Beholder, the Thinker, the Upholder, the Taster, the Lord, the Highest Self.

Who thus knows Spirit, and Nature with her powers, whatever may be his walk here, such a one enters not into rebirth.

Through meditation, some perceive the Self within, through the self; others through the Yoga of thought, and others through the Yoga of works.

Others not thus knowing, worship, hearing from others; and they also cross over death, intent on the truth they have heard. (25)

Whatever being is born, whether stationary or moving, know, O bull of the Bharatas, that it comes from the union between the field and the knower of the field.

He who beholds the Supreme Lord dwelling ever the same in all beings, not perishing when they perish, he indeed beholds.

For beholding everywhere the Lord who dwells in all things, he of himself injures not himself, and thus goes the higher way.

But he who perceives that works are altogether worked by Nature, and that the Self engages not in works, he indeed perceives.

When he perceives the manifold nature of beings resting in One, and their diversity also springing from That, then he enters the Eternal.

As beginningless, and not divided according to the powers, this Supreme Self, unchanging, even though dwelling in the body, O son of Kunti, neither works nor is stained. (31)

As from its fineness the all-pervading ether is not stained, so the Self, though everywhere embodied, is not stained.

As the one sun illumines all this world, so, O descendant of Bharata, the knower of the field lights up the whole field.

They who, with the eye of wisdom, perceive the distinction between the field and the knower of the field, and the liberation of being from Nature, go to the Supreme.

BOOK XIV.

THE MASTER SAID :

I shall further declare to thee this wisdom, which is the best of all wisdoms, knowing which all silent seers have passed hence to supreme success.

Taking refuge in this wisdom, attaining to oneness of being with Me, at the creation of worlds they go not forth, nor do they fail, when the worlds are dissolved.

The Eternal, the Great One, is the womb for Me, wherein I lay the germ; thence, O descendant of Bharata, comes the birth of all beings.

Whatever forms, O son of Kunti, are born in all wombs, the Eternal, the Great One, is the womb, and I am the Father who gives the seed.

Substance, Force, Darkness: these are the Powers born of Nature; they bind, O mighty armed one, the eternal lord of the body within the body. (5)

There Substance, luminous through its stainlessness, and free from sorrow, binds by the bond of pleasure, and the bond of knowledge, O blameless one.

Force, of the essence of desire, engendering thirst and attachment, binds the lord of the body by the bond of works, O son of Kunti.

But Darkness, born of unwisdom, is known to be the deluder of all who are embodied; it binds through heedlessness, indolence and sleep, O descendant of Bharata.

Substance causes attachment through pleasure; Force, through works, O descendant of Bharata; but Darkness, enwrapping wisdom, causes attachment through sloth.

Overcoming Force and Darkness, Substance prevails, O descendant of Bharata; Force prevails over Substance and Darkness, or Darkness over Substance and Force. (10)

When light shines at all the doors in this dwelling, when wisdom shines, then let him know that Substance has prevailed.

Desire of possessions, activity, the undertaking of works, restlessness, longing, these are born when Force prevails, O bull of the Bharatas.

Obscurity, inactivity, sloth, delusion, these are born when Darkness prevails, O descendant of Kuru.

But when the wearer of the body comes to dissolution while Substance prevails, then he enters into the stainless worlds of those who know the best.

Coming to dissolution with Force prevailing, he is reborn among those who are bound by works; and so reaching dissolution with Darkness prevailing, he is born in wombs of delusion. (15)

They declare that the fruit of works well done is stainless, belonging to Substance; the fruit of Force is pain; the fruit of Darkness is unwisdom.

From Substance is born wisdom; from Force comes the desire of possessions; from Darkness come sloth, delusion and unwisdom also.

Those who dwell in Substance go upward; in the midst stand those who dwell in Force; those who dwell in Darkness go downward, under the sway of the lowest powers.

When the seer perceives that the source of works is no other than the powers, and when he beholds That which is beyond the powers, he enters into My being.

Passing beyond these three powers, from which the body comes into being, the lord of the body, let go by birth and death and age and pain, reaches immortality. (20)

ARJUNA SAID:

What are the marks of him who has passed beyond the three powers, Lord? What is his walk? And how does he transcend the three powers?

THE MASTER SAID:

He who, O son of Pandu, hates not Light, nor Activity nor Delusion, when they are manifested, nor desires them when they have passed away,

Remaining an onlooker only, unperturbed by the three powers, seeing that the powers alone work, he stands unwavering,

Equal in pain and pleasure, dwelling in the Self, regarding a clod, a stone and gold as equal; balanced in gladness and woe, wise, holding equal balance in blame or praise,

Balanced in honor or dishonor, balanced toward friend and enemy,

ceasing from all personal initiatives, such a one has passed beyond the three powers. (25)

And he who serves Me with faithful love, he, passing beyond the three powers, builds for oneness with the Eternal.

For I am the resting place of the Eternal, of unfading immortality, of immemorial law and perfect joy.

BOOK XV.

THE MASTER SAID :

Rooted above, downward-branching, they say, is that immemorial tree, whose leaves are the hymns, who knows it, knows the Vedas.

Down and upward stretch its branches, grown strong through the powers, and with things of sense for twigs; downward stretch its roots which bind to works in the world of men.

The form of it cannot be so perceived in this world, nor its end, nor beginning, nor its foundation; with the firm sword of detachment cutting this tree, whose roots grow firm,

Let him then follow the path to that resting-place, whither going, they come forth no more, saying: "I enter into the primal Spirit, whence hath flowed forth the ancient stream of things."

They who are free from pride and delusion, who have conquered the fault of attachment, who dwell ever in the Oversoul, who have turned back from desire, who are freed from the opposites called pleasure and pain, go undeluded to that everlasting rest. (5)

The sun shines not there, nor the moon, nor fire; whither going, they return not again, that is My supreme home.

The immemorial part of Me, which becomes life in the living world, draws the mind and the powers of sense and action which dwell in Nature.

When the lord of the body takes a body, and when he departs from it, he goes forth, taking the powers with him, as the wind carries perfumes with it.

Through hearing, seeing, touch, taste and smell, and likewise mind, he partakes of objects of sense.

Fools perceive not him as that which leaves the body or lingers in it, tasting through union with the powers, but those perceive who possess the eye of wisdom. (10)

Seekers of union, who press on, perceive him within themselves ; but even pressing on, the uncontrolled, devoid of wisdom, perceive him not.

The light that, dwelling in the sun, illumines the whole world, the light that is in the moon, in fire, know that light to be of Me.

Entering the world and all beings, I support them by my force ; and I feed all plants, becoming Soma, the essence of the sap.

I, becoming vital fire, and entering the bodies of all living things, joined with the forward breath and the downward breath, prepare the four-fold food.

And I have entered into the heart of each, from Me come memory, knowledge, judgment ; through all Vedas am I to be known, I am the maker of the Vedanta, the knower of the Vedas. (15)

There are two Spirits in the world, the changing and the unchanging ; the changing is all beings, the unchanging is that which stands firm.

But the Highest Spirit is other than these, it is called the Supreme Self ; it is the everlasting Lord, who, entering the three worlds, upholds them.

As I transcend the changing, and am also more excellent than the unchanging, therefore in the world and in the Vedas I am praised as the Supreme Spirit.

Who knows Me thus, free from delusion, as the Supreme Spirit, he, all-knowing, loves Me with his whole heart, O son of Bharata.

Thus this most secret scripture is declared by Me, O blameless one ; who understands this, possesses wisdom, and has attained his goal, O son of Bharata. (20)

BOOK XVI.

THE MASTER SAID:

Valor, cleanness of heart, steadfast union with illumination, generous giving, control, sacrifice, study, fervor, righteousness,

Gentleness, truth, freedom from anger, detachment, peace, loyalty, pity for all beings, an unlascivious mind, mildness, modesty, steadfastness,

Fire, patience, firmness, purity, good-will, absence of conceit, these belong to him who is born to the godlike portion, O descendant of Bharata!

Hypocrisy, pride, vanity, anger, meanness, unwisdom, these, O son of Pritha, are his, who is born to the demoniac portion.

The godlike portion makes for liberation, and the demoniac for bondage. But grieve not, son of Pandu! thou art born to the godlike portion. (5)

There are two ways of beings in this world: the godlike and the demoniac. The godlike has been declared at length; hear now from Me the demoniac, O son of Pritha.

Those of demoniac nature know not right action nor right abstinence; nor purity nor discipline nor truth are found in them.

This world, say they, is without truth or firm foundation, without a Lord; not ruled by mutual law, driven only by wilfulness.

Resting in this view, self-destroying, of little wisdom, they come forth violent and hostile, for the destruction of the world.

Taking their refuge in desire insatiable, following after hypocrisy, vanity, madness, through delusion grasping after thoughts of evil, they follow unclean lives; (10)

Given to limitless imaginings stopped only by death, they yield themselves up to the enjoyment of their desires, persuaded that there is nothing else;

Bound by a hundred meshes of expectation, filled with lust and

wrath, they seek, for the enjoyment of their desires, to heap up wealth unjustly :

"This have I gained to-day ; this desire shall I obtain ; this much I have, and this shall I have of further wealth.

"This foe has been slain by me, and I shall slay yet others. I am a lord, I am master of feasts, I have won success and might and happiness ;

"I am wealthy and well-born, what other is like unto me ? I shall sacrifice, I shall give gifts, I shall exult ;" thus say they, deluded by un wisdom, (15)

Wandering in many imaginings, enmeshed by the nets of delusion, fastened to the feasts of their desires, they fall into the impure pit of hell.

Puffed up with self-conceit, vain, following after wealth, fame, intoxication, their offerings are no true offerings, full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

Clinging to self-conceit, violence, pride, lust, wrath, hating Me in themselves and in others, and full of cavilling ;

Them, full of hate, cruel, basest of men in the world, I cast down quickly in their impurity into demoniac wombs.

Entering demoniac birth, deluded in birth after birth, not finding Me, O son of Kunti, they go the lower way. (20)

Threefold is this door of soul-destroying hell : lust, wrath, and greed are its doors ; therefore let him shun these three.

The man who gets free from these three doors of darkness, O son of Kunti, reaches happiness of soul, and thenceforth goes the higher way.

He who, scorning the scriptural law, does according to his own lusts, reaches not perfection, nor happiness, nor the higher way.

Therefore the scripture is thy rule, to establish what shall be done, what left undone. Knowing the work appointed to thee by the scripture, deign thou therefore to perform it.

BOOK XVII.

ARJUNA SAID:

They who, neglecting the scripture ordinance, nevertheless sacrifice full of faith, what is their basis, is it Substance, Force or Darkness?

THE MASTER SAID:

Faith is of three kinds; it is according to the innate character of embodied beings, either of Substance, or of Force, or of Darkness. Hear it thus:

Everyone is according to the nature of his faith, descendant of Bharata. For man is formed of faith; what his faith is, that verily is he.

Those of Substance worship bright deities; those of Force, deities greedy and passionate; the others, the men of Darkness, worship the hosts of darkness, the spirits of night.

They who submit themselves to penance not appointed by scripture, and terrible, their hearts full of hypocrisy and vanity, following after lust, rage, violence, (5)

Foolishly afflicting the lives that dwell within their bodies, and Me also within their inner selves, know these to be of demoniac mind.

And the favorite food of each is also divided threefold, and likewise the sacrifice, penance, gifts. Learn the divisions of these:

Foods that increase the life-force, power, strength, health, well-being, happiness, foods that are savory, mild, strengthening, vigorous, are dear to the men of Substance.

Foods that are acrid, bitter, salt, over-hot, sharp, stinging and burning, are the foods dear to the men of Force, and bring pain and sorrow and sickness.

Foods that are stale, whose savor has departed, which are decayed and corrupt, things that are leavings and impure are the choice of the men of Darkness. (10)

The sacrifice that is offered according to law, by those who are not seeking reward, but whose only thought is, that it is right to sacrifice, is the offering of the men of Substance.

But what is offered through desire of reward, or through hypocrisy, know this, O best of the Bharatas, to be the sacrifice of Force.

The sacrifice that is offered contrary to law, at which no food is distributed, where there are no chants nor gifts, the sacrifice that is without faith, is declared to be of Darkness.

Reverence for divine beings, for the twice born, the spiritual teacher, the wise, purity, righteousness, chastity, gentleness, this is declared to be the true penance of the body.

Speech that brings peace, true, friendly and kind, and assiduous study are declared to be the true penance of word. (15)

Quietness of heart, amiability, silence, self-control, purity of nature, this is declared to be the true penance of the mind.

This threefold penance, offered with perfect faith by men who seek no personal reward, who are joined in union, is declared to be the penance of Substance.

But the penance that is offered to gain a name for piety, for fame or respect, and in hypocrisy, this is declared to be the penance of Force, unstable and infirm.

The penance that is offered with a deluded heart, through suffering self-inflicted, or in order to destroy another, this is declared to be the penance of Darkness.

What gift is given because it ought to be given, to one who will not repay it, at the right time and place, to the right person, this is recorded to be the gift of Substance. (20)

But the gift that is given for the sake of a benefit in return or for some personal reward, or by constraint, this is recorded to be the gift of Force.

The gift given at the wrong place and time, to the wrong person, not through kindness, but haughtily, that is declared to be the gift of Darkness.

"Om That True," this is recorded as the triple symbol of the Eternal; through this of old were Brahmans and Vedas and sacrifices ordained.

Therefore reciting "Om" are sacrifices, gifts and penances performed, according to ordinance, by those who know the Eternal:

With thought of "That" are the rites of sacrifices and penance and giving, in all their forms, performed by those who seek liberation.

"True" is used to indicate the Real and the Good; the word "True" is likewise used, O son of Pritha, for auspicious work. (26)

Steadfastness in sacrifice, penance, gifts is declared to be "true"; and whatever work makes for these is also declared to be "true."

Whatever sacrifice is offered, whatever gift is given, whatever penance is performed, whatever is done, without faith, that, O son of Pritha, is declared to be "untrue"; neither in the other world nor in this does it avail.

BOOK XVIII.

ARJUNA SAID:

The truth of Renunciation, O mighty-armed one, I would learn of Thee, and of Resignation, with their difference, O Thou demon-slayer of flowing locks!

THE MASTER SAID:

The renouncing of works done through desire, sages have called Renunciation; and the wise have declared that ceasing from all desire of personal reward for one's work is Resignation.

Some of those who follow after knowledge have declared that every work is to be abandoned, as being faulty; but others say that works of sacrifice, gifts and penance are not to be abandoned.

Learn therefore from Me the certain truth concerning Resignation, O best descendant of Bharata; for Resignation, O tiger of men, is declared to be of three kinds.

Works of sacrifice, gifts and penance are not to be abandoned, but are to be performed; for sacrifice, gifts and penance are the purifiers of those who seek wisdom. (5)

But even these works are to be performed with abandonment of attachment and the desire of reward; this, O son of Pritha, is My sure and excellent decision.

But the renunciation of necessary work is not right; the ceasing from such work comes of delusion, and is declared to be the fruit of Darkness.

Whoever ceases from any work through fear of bodily weariness, and saying: "it is painful," he, making the renunciation of Force, does not gain the fruit of renunciation.

Whatever necessary work is done, O Arjuna, from the thought that it ought to be done, without attachment or desire of reward, this is held to be the renunciation of Substance.

He hates not unhappy work, nor is attached to happy work, the wise renouncer, who is pervaded by Substance, whose doubts are cut. (10)

For it is impossible for an embodied being to abandon all work without exception; but he who has given up the love of reward, he indeed has made the true renunciation.

The fruit of works is threefold, desirable, or undesirable, or mixed; it follows those who have not abandoned desire, but not those who have made renunciation.

Learn from Me, O mighty-armed one, these five causes, which are declared in the Sankhya teaching, for the accomplishment of all works:

They are: the material instrument, the doer, the organ of whatever kind, the different impulses, and, fifthly, Destiny.

Whatever work a man initiates, by body, speech or mind, whether it be righteous or the contrary, these are its five causes. (15)

As this is so, whoever views the Self, the lonely one, as the doer, he, confused in thought, sees not rightly through defect of understanding.

Whose nature is not selfish, whose vision is not stained, even though he slays the whole world, such a one kills not, nor is he subject to bondage.

The knowing, the thing to be known, the knower, make the threefold driving-power of works; the organ, the thing done, the doer, make the threefold content of works.

The knowing, the thing done, and the doer, divided threefold according to the powers, are declared according to the enumeration of the powers. Hear thou rightly these:

The knowledge whereby one eternal nature is perceived in all beings, undivided though beings are divided, know that knowledge to be of Substance. (20)

But the knowledge which sees in all beings various natures according to their variety, know that knowledge to be of Force.

But the knowledge which attaches itself to one thing, as though that were the whole, lacking the right motive, without true perception, narrow, know that to be of Darkness.

The work that is done because it is necessary, without attachment, without lust or hate, by one who seeks no reward, is declared to be the work of Substance.

But work done by one seeking his desire, and selfishly, and with abundant toil, is declared to be the work of Force.

What work is begun without regard for consequences for the loss it may cause, or injury to others, or waste of power, through delusion, this is declared to be of Darkness. (25)

The doer who is free from attachment, without vanity, who has firmness and will, who is not changed by success or failure, such a one is declared to be of Substance.

The doer who is full of desire, who seeks the reward of his works, who is greedy, who harms others and is impure, who falls into exultation or sorrow, is famed to be of Force.

The doer who is without union, brutish, conceited, malignant, unfair, slothful, despondent, temporising, is declared to be of Darkness.

Hear thou the division of understanding and of firmness, three-fold according to the powers, declared completely according to their differences, O conqueror of wealth.

The understanding which knows action and abstention, what is to be done, what left undone, what is to be feared and what not, and also bondage and freedom, that, O son of Pritha, is of Substance. (30)

The understanding which distinguishes not truly between law and lawlessness, what should and should not be done is of Force, O son of Pritha.

The understanding which, enwrapped in darkness, sees the unlawful as lawful, and all things as opposite to their true nature, that, O son of Pritha, is of Darkness.

The firmness whereby one firmly holds the emotional nature, and the actions of the life-powers, unwavering in union, that, O son of Pritha, is the firmness of Substance.

But the firmness, O Arjuna, whereby one desiring reward holds firmly to duty, desire, riches, that, O son of Pritha is the firmness of Force.

But the firmness through which one of foolish mind will not let go dreams, fears, grief, despondency, arrogance, that, O son of Pritha, is of Darkness. (35)

Hear now from Me the three kinds of happiness, O bull of the Bharatas, through following which one finds delight, and makes an end of pain.

That which at the beginning is as poison, but in the outcome is like nectar, that is the happiness of Substance, springing from clear vision of the Soul.

The happiness which springs from the union of the senses with the

objects of desire, in the beginning like nectar, but in the outcome like poison, that is declared to be the happiness of Force.

The happiness which, in the beginning, and to the end, causes blindness to the Soul, springing from sleep, sloth, negligence, that is declared to be of Darkness.

Neither on earth, nor in heaven, nor among the gods is there any being which is free from these three powers born of Nature. (40)

The works of Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra, O consumer of the foe, are apportioned according to the powers inherent in the character of each.

Peace, control, penance, purity, patience, and also rectitude, wisdom, knowledge, affirmative faith, are the Brahman's work, according to his nature.

Heroism, fire, firmness, skill, and refusal to flee in battle, giving of gifts, governing, are the works of the Kshatriya, according to his nature.

Ploughing, tending cattle, commerce, are the natural work of the Vaishya; work which consists in service is the natural work of the Shudra. (44)

By devotion each to his own work, every man gains true success; how each finds success through devotion to his own work, learn thou:

From Whom all beings come, by Whom all this is stretched forth, Him honoring, each by his own work, the son of man finds success.

Better is one's own duty even without excellence than the duty of another well carried out; doing the work imposed by one's own nature, he incurs no sin.

Let not a man withdraw from his natural work, O son of Kunti, even if it be faulty; for all initiatives are subject to fault, as fire is wrapped in smoke.

With thought everywhere unattached, self-conquered, from long-ing free, through renunciation he gains supreme success, free from bondage to works.

And how, having gained success, he gains the Eternal, learn thou of Me, hearing briefly, O son of Kunti, what is the supreme seat of wisdom. (50)

With soul-vision kept pure, firmly self-controlled, detached from sounds and other sense-objects, and discarding lust and hate;

Seeking solitude, eating little, with speech, body and mind con-

trolled, given up to union through soul-vision, following ever after dispassion ;

Getting free from vanity, violence, pride, lust, wrath, avarice, without desire of possessions, full of peace, he builds for union with the Eternal.

Become one with the Eternal, with soul at peace, he grieves not nor desires ; equal toward all beings, he gains highest love of Me.

Through love he learns Me truly, how great and what I am ; then knowing Me truly, he straightway enters that Supreme. (55)

Even continuing to perform all works, taking refuge in Me, through My grace he gains that everlasting home.

In heart renouncing all works in Me, devoted to Me, following after union through soul-vision, keep thy heart ever set on Me.

With heart set on Me, through My grace thou shalt cross through all rough places. But if through vanity thou wilt not hearken to Me, thou shalt perish.

When through self-assertion thou thinkest : "I will not fight !" thy determination is a delusion, for Nature will constrain thee. (59)

Bound, O son of Kunti, by thine own natural work, what thou desirest not to do through thy delusion, thou shalt do against thy will.

The Lord dwells in the heart of every creature, O Arjuna, through His divine power moving all beings, as though guided by mechanism.

Take refuge in Him with thy whole heart, O descendant of Bharata ; through His grace thou shalt gain supreme peace, the everlasting resting-place.

Thus to thee that wisdom which is more secret than all secrets is declared by Me ; fully pondering on it, as thou desirest, so do !

Hear further My ultimate word, most secret of all ; thou art exceeding dear to Me, therefore will I speak what is good for thee.

Set thy heart on Me, full of love for Me, sacrificing to Me, make obeisance to Me, and thou shalt come to Me ; this is truth I promise thee, for thou art dear to Me. (65)

Putting aside all other duties, come for refuge to Me alone ; grieve not, for I shall set thee free from all sins.

This is never to be told by thee to him who is without fervor, without love, to him who seeks not to hear it, or who cavils at Me.

Whosoever shall declare this supreme secret in the company of those who love Me, showing the highest love for Me, he shall certainly come to Me.

Nor does any among mankind do aught dearer to Me than he; nor shall any in the world be dearer to Me than he.

And whosoever shall study this righteous converse of Me and thee, such a one sacrifices to Me the sacrifice of wisdom; such is My thought.

And whosoever shall hear it, full of faith and without cavil, he also, set free, will gain the shining worlds of those of holy works.

Say then, O son of Pritha, whether thou hast listened in singleness of heart; say whether thy delusion of unwisdom is destroyed, O conquerer of wealth!

ARJUNA SAID:

Gone is my delusion; I have come to right remembrance through Thy grace, O unfallen one! I stand, with my doubts gone. I shall fulfil thy word!

SANJAYA SAID:

Thus did I hear the converse of the son of Vasudeva and the mighty-souled son of Pritha, marvelous, causing the hair to stand erect with wonder.

Through Vyasa's grace I heard this supreme secret, this union, from the Lord of union, Krishna himself, relating it. (75)

O king, ever and anon remembering this marvelous converse, this holy talk between him of the flowing locks and Arjuna, I exult again and again.

And ever and anon remembering Lord Hari's marvelous form, great dismay comes on me, O king, and I exult again and again.


Wherever are Krishna, Lord of union, and Pritha's son, bearer of the bow, there are fortune, victory, blessing and steadfast law; this I maintain.

THUS THE BHAGAVAD GITA IS COMPLETED.

MAY IT BE WELL WITH ALL BEINGS!

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